CONDE DE GONDOMAR

F. H. LYON

Oxford
1910

DIEGO DE SARMIENTO DE ACUÑA,
CONDE DE GONDOMAR

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DIEGO DE SARMIENTO DE ACUÑA CONDE DE GONDOMAR

THE LOTHIAN HISTORICAL ESSAY
FOR 1909

BY

F. H. LYON

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DIEGO DE SARMIENTO DE ACUÑA, CONDE DE GONDOMAR

CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF SARMIENTO

Europe in 1613—Philip II.—Philip III. and Lerma—Objects of Sarmiento's embassy—James I. and the Catholics—Sarmiento's early life—Character and defects.

THE European situation, in the year 1613, was marked by few signs of permanence. The traditions of the sixteenth century were fading, and the balance of power was shifting, as new ideals, new policies, and new rivalries began to exercise their influence upon the character of European statecraft. The close of the sixteenth century had been fruitful of change. France, torn for thirty years by religious quarrels, had for the time gained strength and unity under Henry IV. England, under Elizabeth's skilful guidance, had cautiously avoided complications in Europe, and had made enormous strides in maritime and commercial enterprise. The German states were growing restive under the Hapsburg yoke. In the hearts of German Protestants the fire still burned which was kindled by Luther on the day when he rode to Worms, with

the Emperor's herald before him, and thoughts of Savonarola in his heart. But the vital fact of the period, which colours all the history of those critical years, is the decay of Spain. The Spanish Empire had been, without question, the most powerful force in the politics of the sixteenth century. The union of the crown of Ferdinand and Isabella with that of the Emperor Maximilian had placed in the hands of Charles V. an engine which, if skilfully handled, could not fail to make his inheritors the strongest monarchs in Europe ; and Charles, a man of no real genius, but patient, astute, and perfectly unscrupulous, bequeathed to Philip II. a great heritage in the Old World and in the New. The other portion fell to the share of the Emperor Ferdinand. Philip II. was not a great man, but he was a great figure in the eyes of his contemporaries, and he has, with all his failings, done much to dignify the history of Spain. With an unwearied patience, an immense capacity for detail, and a firm conviction of the righteousness of his cause, he worked for the establishment of a universal monarchy of Spain, side by side with the universal hierarchy of the Pope. His policy was a crusade for the forcible religious unification of Christendom ; and the prevailing spirit of sixteenth-century Spanish thought and literature was a spirit of asceticism and self-sacrifice. The "chivalric tales" inspired thousands of Spaniards to die for their country and the true faith, of which Spain was the chosen vehicle.

Philip's world-policy was one of the great failures of history. The Netherlands consumed his armies,

while England assailed his domination of the sea. Disillusionment followed, and the Spain in which Sarmiento grew up was in the throes of a reaction. Philip, shattered in health and broken by disappointment, clung to his ideals ; while around him the national character and traditions went rapidly downhill. In April, 1598, Philip II. died in his castle in the Guadarrama. A grim enough old bigot he has seemed to Protestant posterity ; he has been branded as the murderer of his son, the employer of those who raised the scaffold of Egmont and polluted the waters of the Haarlem Lake—the constant enemy of light and progress, of justice and humanity. To his people he is a hero and a saint ; it is "El gran Rey Felipe II." who stands for the past greatness of Spain ; and certain it is that with his death flickered out the last ray of hope for the stability of the Spanish Empire.

The régime of Philip III. and the Duke of Lerma, under which Sarmiento spent twenty of his twenty-five years of public life, afforded a sorry spectacle to a patriotic Spaniard. The king, timid, slothful, and self-indulgent, left every detail of government in the hands of Lerma and his creatures ; and the Duke was for many years absolute ruler of Spain. In the other countries of Europe, where the real condition of Spain was unknown, Lerma had a great reputation for statesmanship. In England he was frequently compared to James I.'s favourite Somerset, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter. In reality, few men have ever governed a country with greater incapacity, none with greater callousness

and disregard for the welfare of its inhabitants. At home he maintained a policy of prodigality; abroad, a policy of futile aggression. The spirit which inspired the schemes of Philip II. was dead indeed; the chivalric tales had been smothered with ridicule by the new literature, in which the chivalrous knight gave place to the selfish rogue, whose rogueries were invariably made to end in triumph. "Lazarillo de Tormes" and "Guzman de Alfarache" are typical of this school of fiction. The real death-blow to the chivalric tales, however, was dealt by a man who took the heroic knight, the stock character of the authors he despised, and made of him a ridiculous figure, wasting a life-time in the prosecution of absurd and unnecessary adventures, an embodiment of all that was exaggerated and unpractical in the chivalric legends. "Don Quixote" is the type of the new spirit which was pervading society, and the monument of the chivalric ideal, slain by the biting wit of Cervantes. But though the spirit which justified the ideal was gone, the ideal itself lingered on, a moribund anachronism indeed, but retaining sufficient strength to act as a clog on Spanish policy. In the seventeenth century, an era of powerful national states, the scheme was totally impracticable, and the holy crusade appeared to the alarmed nations as an intolerable project of aggression. Yet the policy lived on in the minds of Spanish politicians; in the minds of men like Lerma, because they were incapable of devising any rational alternative; in the minds of men like Sarmiento, because their

patriotic pride refused to admit the national decadence, and forbade them to leave the path marked out by the great exponent of the Spanish world-policy. But the total failure of the Irish expedition in 1602, and the successful resistance of the Dutch, led to the abandonment of the theory of forcible unification. The scheme assumed a new shape. The governments of the Protestant countries were to be stroked and flattered; a judicious resident ambassador was to gain the ear of the sovereign, support him against any domestic opposition, and gradually lead him over to the fold of the true Church. The support of the sovereigns being withdrawn, the collapse of Protestantism would follow; and the great work would be achieved. The plan was delightfully simple on paper. But it may be said without exaggeration that a great nation has rarely adopted, as the basis of its foreign policy, a more impracticable scheme. It was as the promoter of this policy of royal conversion, and as an ardent believer in its merits, that Diego de Sarmiento landed in England in August, 1613.

The object with which Sarmiento was sent to England was, in an often-repeated phrase, "to keep the King of England good." He was to prevent James from entering into an alliance with any other Power against Spain, and to do what he could on behalf of the English Catholics. To understand the condition of the Catholics it is necessary to trace briefly the relations of James and English Catholicism from the time of his accession. James, when he came to England, was perfectly willing to extend

the largest possible measure of toleration to his Catholic subjects. The years he had spent in Scotland had filled him with an intense dislike of the Presbyterians, and he fled gladly from the dour counsellors of his youth to the more genial bosom of the English Church, already tinged with the new Arminian doctrines. James himself remained a Calvinist, but he looked with a friendly eye upon bishops with Arminian leanings, and he was ready to tolerate the Catholics. The Puritans saw at once that they could hope for nothing from James. At the Hampton Court Conference was sealed that alliance between episcopacy and prerogative which forty years later dragged down Church and Throne together in a common ruin. "Nae bishop, nae king," James had cried, as he scowled upon the Turkey-gowned divines; and the germ of the Great Rebellion lay hidden in that unlucky aphorism. James had already, in 1603, remitted the recusancy fines, after the futile Watson's Plot; but the result was most disconcerting. The Catholics who had hitherto attended church as a matter of form naturally ceased to do so. The country gentlemen, who were accustomed to receive the Sacrament clandestinely from a priest, concealed in some remote attic or secret chamber, and sent their servants to the village church, now withheld that exiguous tribute to the established creed. James, angry and disappointed at the failure of his policy, ordered the banishment of all priests; and when he discovered that the representations made at Rome by his officious envoy Lindsay had

led to the appointment of twelve cardinals as a committee for the conversion of England, he lost all patience and ordered the penal laws to be put in force at once. The immediate result was Gunpowder Plot. By every canon of logic, Gunpowder Plot should have destroyed for ever all hopes of toleration for the English Catholics. History, however, is notoriously reluctant to conform to the rules of logic, and although new and far more severe recusancy laws were placed on the statute-book, it is a fact that within twelve years from the death of Fawkes and Catesby Catholic hopes were as bright as at the beginning of the reign. The reason for this is to be found in James's hankering for the Spanish alliance and the Spanish marriage, and his subservience to the King of Spain's powerful ambassador.

Diego de Sarmiento was born, probably about 1570, in the fertile but rugged province of Galicia, of which his ancestors had been from time immemorial "Adelantados," or lords-lieutenant. His father was Don Garcia Sarmiento, his mother Doña Juana de Acuña, and he was descended from the lords of Salvatierra and Ribadavia, towns which stand about thirty miles apart on the high banks of the rapid Minho. Amid the mountain scenery of the Minho basin Sarmiento passed his youth, and in later years, when he had risen to the highest honours, and moved among kings and ministers, he never forgot Galicia. When he was made a Count he took his new title from the little town of Gondomar, which lies on a small stream a few miles

from the beautiful bay of Vigo, and near Bayona, of which he had been governor.* At the end of his life, too, when private jealousies excluded him from the counsels of his king, he returned as governor to his native province, where his memory is still enshrined in the ruined castle of Sobroso. His parents, intending him to enter public life, gave him the best possible education, and he was still a young man when his capacity was recognised by his appointment to an office of responsibility. In 1593 he was made a Knight Companion of the Order of Calatrava, and in 1600 was appointed corregidor of Toro, in the province of Leon, about half-way between Zamora and Valladolid. The corregidor of a Spanish town was the chief magistrate and practically governor. The contemporary writer Markham speaks of "Corregidors or Beadles to punish the Infragantic or unruly." In 1602 Sarmiento was transferred to Valladolid, where he built or purchased a fine house, which he retained long after he had ceased to be Corregidor. Two years later he received the title of "Consejero de Hacienda," and early in 1605 resigned his office of Corregidor. It is not clear how he was occupied in the four years between 1605 and 1609, but in the latter year he was made Notario Mayor of Toledo, and, either a short time before or a short time after, made Governor of Bayona, on the Galician coast. In these posts Sarmiento obtained plenty of ex-

* It is not clear from the correspondence of Gondomar and Lafuente whether Gondomar chose the title himself, or whether Philip III. chose it for him. The former seems the more probable.

perience, but little opportunity of displaying his diplomatic gifts. He was able, however, to acquire a knowledge of all kinds of men which proved invaluable to him in later life.

Several portraits of Sarmiento by contemporary draughtsmen survive, the main features of which are fairly consistent. They reveal him to us as a man of middle height, with dark moustache and beard, and close-cropped, scanty hair above a very wide forehead, with deep-set, dark eyes, a large nose, and a firm, rather sardonic mouth. Some allowance must be made for the fact that the English artists have obviously endowed his features with a Mephistophelean character which seemed to them to be in keeping with his baleful diplomacy. Only one of his portraits, that which is reproduced in Bishop Goodman's "Court of King James I.,"* makes him look good-humoured. In the others he is dignified, formidable, almost saturnine. They serve, however, to remind us that beneath the mask of joviality which he assumed for James's benefit lay an intense seriousness and determination, and that his life at the English Court, even at the time of his greatest triumphs, was by no means a happy one.

Sarmiento had many personal advantages. He possessed the great gift of knowing exactly what to say and what not to say to each person with whom he came in contact ; he had a remarkable insight into character, and was able to direct his diplomatic shafts against the weak spots in his opponents' armoury. Like most Spaniards, he had perfect

* Edited by J. S. Brewer.

manners ; he was always at his ease, and never at a loss for a tactful speech. He could converse on serious topics with a grave dignity which made an admirable foil to the ready wit which he displayed in casual talk. He had a keen sense of humour and an inexhaustible fund of amusing anecdotes, which made him a most pleasant companion ; and to be a pleasant companion was the most certain way of gaining James's favour. At the same time Sarmiento never allowed his desire to please the king to betray him into any apparent lack of firmness. He always allowed James to see that there were certain points upon which he and his master would never give way. He was a devoted servant of Philip III., and a fervent believer in the Catholic crusade. He had learnt in the diplomatic school of Philip II. that the King of Spain was the greatest of earthly monarchs, and he combined with this belief a genuine devotion to the Roman Catholic Church. The intolerance of heresy which is shown in his correspondence is naïve to the verge of absurdity. He was as firmly convinced of the truth of his own religious creed, and the fallaciousness of all other conceivable beliefs, as of the existence of the sun and stars. He was perfectly willing to make any sacrifice by which the lot of his fellow-Catholics living under heretic governments could be improved, and he brought to his task an acuteness and a knowledge of men which were of inestimable service to those whom he sought to protect. As ambassador of the King of Spain, he honestly believed himself entitled to a moral precedence over

the other ambassadors at the English Court; he was exacting in all matters of title and ceremonial, and he knew how to assume a hauteur which at once satisfied his own sense of importance as representative of the most Catholic king and impressed his rivals with the belief that he was a man with whom no sort of liberty could be taken. He knew the readiness of human nature to take people at their own valuation, and he found, as time went on, that the position which he claimed for himself at the English Court was tacitly, if reluctantly, admitted even by his opponents. As regards his diplomacy he might have said, as the Frenchman Sieyès said of politics nearly two hundred years later, that diplomacy was a science in which he was perfect. In other words, he was a master of diplomatic method. Given the end to be gained, he might safely be relied upon to gain it. He was a perfect exponent of the elaborately frank admission, the judicious half-truth, the convincing lie; he knew, in fact, every trick in the diplomatic game.

His ability was marred, however, by grave defects, and the strength of his diplomatic methods serves to emphasise the weakness and short-sightedness of his statesmanship. He was far too prejudiced and unsympathetic to be a statesman. He had no large conception of policy beyond the limits of the stereotyped programme of the political and religious aggrandisement of Spain and her Church; it never entered his head that the changing political conditions in the other countries of Europe could make it necessary for the King of Spain to abandon

or even reconsider his policy. He did not think it necessary to find out the temper and tendencies of the various peoples; he took his ideas of European states from Spain, and mentally applied to other countries conditions analogous to those prevailing in his own. The cardinal mistake which vitiated his policy throughout his embassy in London was his contempt for the mass of the English people. He deliberately set James to pursue a line of policy which ran counter to the feelings and wishes of his people, and it apparently did not occur to him that the latter were likely to prevail in the end. He never attempted in any way to mitigate the hostility of Englishmen towards himself. He treated popular feeling with contempt. He knew that in Spain the nation had to do what the king, or Lerma, wished it to do, and that popular discontent could never have the smallest influence on the policy of the Government. Unable to realise how wide a gulf was fixed between the worm-eaten despotism of Spain, represented by men like Lerma, and the budding constitutional life of England, represented by men like Pym and Eliot, he treated the open hostility of Parliament and people with indifference. He exerted himself to prevent the summoning of Parliament for one reason only—that without Parliamentary grants James was unable to carry out his obligations to his anti-Spanish allies in different parts of Europe. The importance of this will appear later.

No less fatal than Sarmiento's neglect of the feeling of the English people was his neglect of the

real strength of Protestantism in the country. He seems to have seriously imagined that the conversion of England depended upon the conversion of the Royal Family and the Court. During the prolonged negotiations for the marriage of Prince Charles to the Spanish Infanta he concerned himself only with the readiness of James and his immediate advisers to accept the Spanish terms, and totally ignored the intense dislike with which the project was viewed by the vast majority of Englishmen. This neglect of the wishes of the country would have been a mistake even if the negotiations had been, as has often been maintained, a sham from beginning to end ; but to those who may take the view—which Sarmiento's letters indicate to be the right view—that the ambassador was, from 1617 at any rate, seriously in favour of the carrying out of the marriage as a means of uniting Spain and England and crippling the other Protestant Powers of Europe, it shows an amazing lack of insight.

CHAPTER II

SARMIENTO AND THE CATHOLICS

Foreign politics: Italy and the Low Countries—The French marriage — James's difficulties — The pensioners — Doña Luisa de Carvajal—Commercial grievances—King and Commons.

THE political situation in the autumn of 1613 was by no means promising for Spain, who seemed likely to find herself confronted by a strong anti-Spanish league stretching right across Europe. Of such a league James must clearly be head. He was in alliance with the German Princes of the Union and on friendly terms with the Dutch, the deadliest enemies of Spain, while he was anxious to form a coalition which should check the spread of Spanish influence in Northern Italy. Both in Italy and in the Low Countries, at the close of 1613, minor conflagrations were going on which might very well spread and cause a European war. In Italy, the disturbing factor was the hot-headed Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, who had attacked Mantua and attempted to take possession of Montferrat. On the question of Montferrat he came into collision with the Spaniards of the Milanese. The republic of Venice was indignant at the Duke's conduct

towards Mantua, but it was clear that a breach with Savoy would benefit nobody except Spain, and might have the effect of reconciling Charles Emanuel and the Spaniards, who were represented in Milan by the Marquis de Inojosa. The policy of England was to bring Venice and Savoy together and form an effective league against Spain. Although in the Low Countries peace had been made between the Spaniards and the Dutch by the Truce of Antwerp in 1609, the dispute between the Princes of Brandenburg and Neuburg for the succession in the Duchies of Cleves and Juliers seemed likely to lead to a renewal of the war. A provisional partition of the duchies had been made in the autumn of 1613, but the mutual mistrust of the claimants led to an attempt on the part of Brandenburg to seize Düsseldorf. Driven out by Neuburg, he retired to Juliers, which was immediately occupied by the Dutch. Both in Italy and the Low Countries there was every prospect of war, in which it was certain that James would be strongly urged to assist the Duke of Savoy and the Dutch. It was necessary for Sarmiento to do all he could to keep James neutral, and to nullify the efforts of the anti-Spanish ambassadors in London to stir him into action. Another task which he had to carry out was, at the close of 1613, apparently hopeless. James was negotiating through the Duke of Lennox with the French Court for the marriage of Prince Charles to a French princess, and it was generally considered that the marriage was certain to be concluded. This would be a severe blow to Spain, who was negotiating

at the same time for a double marriage between the King of France and the elder Spanish Infanta and between the young Spanish prince, afterwards Philip IV., and another French princess. Even if the marriages were all concluded, the alliance with England would counterbalance the effect of the alliance with Spain, and if the English marriage was concluded, and the Spanish marriages were not, the power of France would be thrown into the balance on the side of England and the Protestant powers against Spain. In the vain hope of beguiling James away from the French match, Sarmiento was instructed to revive the idea of marrying Prince Charles to the Infanta Maria. At the same time he had to do what he could for the Catholics, and to obtain redress for the commercial grievances of Spain. It was clear that these various objects could not simultaneously be secured, in the face of strong opposition, without establishing a personal influence over the king far stronger than that which any other foreign ambassador could hope to exert.

This was by no means as easy a matter as an acquaintance with the later history of Sarmiento's embassy might suggest. It is hard for those who think of Sarmiento only as the powerful and favoured ambassador of 1621 to realise the struggles of the first two years of his mission, and the quiet patience and firmness by which he gradually obtained his ascendancy over James. James was violently hostile to Spain and devoted to the idea of the French match, and the anti-Spanish party at Court was strong. The queen was friendly, but

she was a woman of little character and limited influence. Sarmiento's position was for many months exceedingly difficult. He came to England with a prejudice against the country and the people which was never dispelled. He detested the climate, of which he frequently complains in his correspondence. A friend who was going to Spain once asked him if he had any commands. "Only my compliments to the sun, whom I have not seen since I came to England," he replied. In January, 1614, before he had been six months in England, he was wishing he could return and carry his bones to "San Benito el viejo," and not leave them in a kitchen-garden in England.* Two months later he wrote in a resigned tone that he was not well, but glad to sacrifice himself to the service of God and the King of Spain,† while in April he reported that it was still cold, that it was snowing as if it were January, and that he had not been able to do without a fire since the beginning of October. In these first months of his embassy he was a harassed stranger in a cold and hostile land. He had no friends at Court beyond the Spanish "confidents," and he was not on intimate terms, as was perhaps natural, with any of the other ambassadors, with the exception of Boischot, the ambassador of the Archduke Albert, with whom he formed a close friendship. With the French ambassador he maintained ordinarily cordial relations, but he would

* To the Bishop of Valladolid.

† To Mendoza, March, 1614. "De salud no me va bien, pero el corazon manda las carnes."

have nothing to do with the envoy of the States-General, and he quarrelled with the Venetian ambassador Foscarini over a question of title—a quarrel which affected his relations not only with that ambassador but with his two successors.* Sarmiento was surrounded by difficulties. He discovered that his correspondence was in danger from an elaborate system of espionage which was carried on by Digby, the English ambassador in Spain, and by which much valuable information, gleaned not only from his correspondence, but from other sources in Madrid, was conveyed to James and his advisers. Digby afterwards told Sarmiento that the Spanish cipher was ridiculously easy, and that anybody could read it, despite the fact that the cipher employed was constantly changing. During the first few months Sarmiento made little headway; he found himself confronted by violent political and religious prejudice at Court and by the strong anti-Spanish bias of the merchants, who were anxious for a profitable war with Spain, and who managed to make very considerable profits out of her raided commerce in time of peace.

The only way in which he could secure a party at Court was by the time-honoured system of pensions. It has been maintained that Sarmiento did not have recourse to bribery to any extent, but this view is contrary to the mass of evidence. Not only are categorical statements as to the arrival of fresh supplies of money from Spain, and the amount spent by Sarmiento in England, made by the Venetian

* State Papers, Venetian, *passim*.

ambassadors, but abundant evidence is to be found in Sarmiento's own correspondence. There is no reason why the statements of Foscarini and Lionello should be discredited. Their reports are, as a rule, laboriously accurate, and they had nothing to gain by giving their Government misleading information. In June, 1614, the Venetian ambassador in Madrid wrote that the Spanish Government had decided to send Sarmiento bills of exchange for 30,000 crowns, as he found himself in great need of money for his negotiations with the English Court, especially to prevent the conclusion of the French marriage.* In the following year Foscarini recorded the arrival of an extraordinary subvention of several thousand crowns for the Spanish ambassador. The question is, however, settled beyond all possibility of doubt by passages in Sarmiento's correspondence. In February, 1615, he drew up a statement of the expenses of the Embassy, in which he declared that he had spent 5,160 reals on "a curious jug and basin" for "Florian," and had given 9,500 reals to "an important person who had twice served the King of Spain." He had also handed over 150,000 reals to "Socrates," in addition to his yearly pension, and 40,000 reals to "Piramo." Elsewhere in his letters he appeals for money to pay arrears of pensions, and enlarges on the expenses which he is obliged to incur. A key to the cipher used in 1615 has revealed the identity of the Spanish "confidents." "Florian" was Mrs. Drummond, a prominent lady at Court, with notorious leanings

* Morosini to Doge.

towards Spain and Catholicism. "Socrates" was Sir William Monson, father of the unfortunate boy who was, three years later, dragged to Court and set up by the Howards as a rival to Buckingham. "Piramo" was the avaricious and scheming Lady Suffolk, whose easy-going husband appears in the list as "Dante." In the same cipher the king himself was "Leandro." the queen "Homero" —a name which constantly recurs in Sarmiento's letters—the prince "Petrarca," Somerset "Apolo," and Digby "Alcides." Bacon is honoured with the appropriate title of "Platon," and that pair of unprincipled time-servers, Cottington and Lake, figure as "Cipion" and "Alejandro." The Spanish ciphers were frequently changed, owing to Sarmiento's fears of the English Government's system of espionage. Early in 1615 he wrote to the Archduke Albert that the English Government were in possession of everything which passed between Brussels, London, and Madrid, and elsewhere in his correspondence with the Archduke references to changes in the cipher may be found. A key, dated February, 1614, gives a different set of names. Here James is "Richard," the queen "Ector," Mrs. Drummond "Amadis," Somerset "Galaor," Digby "Astolfo," Cottington "Gandalin," and Northampton "El Cid." The evidence leaves little room for doubt that Sarmiento pursued the tradition of pensions and bribery on an extensive scale; but it may be conceded that he was not a firm believer in the efficacy of the system. Early in 1615 he showed the Venetian ambassador a letter

which he had written to Lerma declaring that the money spent in bribery in England would be better employed in arming galleons. Sarmiento's protest elicited from Madrid the reply that, although he was right in thinking of reducing the expenses of the embassy, he must not fail to have people in his pay in the Council.* Nearly three years later, in November, 1617, he returned to the attack, and told Philip that the money might be more profitably employed in the armadas, or in the English and Irish seminaries.

The various issues which Sarmiento had to face were, of course, inextricably interwoven. The history of the years from 1614 to 1618 is a jungle of intrigue and tortuous diplomacy, and at the end of the period there was little material change in the situation. The best method of throwing light on Sarmiento's policy is to take his main objects one by one, and find out how far he succeeded in attaining each of them.

The object which appealed to him most was that of improving the lot of the English Catholics. He knew that he had to fight their battle almost single-handed, backed only by a small knot of mercenary sympathisers at Court. He adopted the wise policy of taking the bull by the horns, and before he had been in England three months he had trebled his chances of ultimate success by his exhibition of firmness in the case of Doña Luisa de Carvajal.

Doña Luisa de Carvajal was an elderly Spanish lady of unimpeachable character, who had been

* Philip III. to Sarmiento, March 29, 1615.

living for some years in London, and had occupied the house of Velasco, Sarmiento's predecessor. When Sarmiento came to England she continued to live under the ambassador's roof, as may be gathered from the fact that Sarmiento always couples her name in his correspondence with that of his wife, Doña Catalina. Apart from his narrative of her imprisonment and release, he gives no information as to her life, and the authority for her career in England is a contemporary Spanish book printed at Seville.* In spite of Doña Luisa's high character, her presence in London caused considerable annoyance to the Protestant clergy, owing to the fact that her virtue took the form of proselytising mania. She had already been imprisoned for attempting to convert a shop-boy, and it was known that she kept a large retinue of female servants, all of whom were presumably Catholics. The Protestants argued that a large number of female servants collected under one roof was practically a nunnery, and her arrest was determined upon. Directly she left the Spanish Embassy, where she was secure, for a house in Spitalfields, she was arrested and sent to Lambeth.† Sarmiento sent his wife to Doña Luisa at Lambeth, and immediately complained to the king. James sent him a message offering to release Doña Luisa at once on condition that she should leave England

* Professor Gardiner, "History of England." Professor Gardiner did not see the book himself, but was shown a description of it written by a Mr. Ticknor, who possessed a copy.

† To Philip III., November, 1613. "Mi senora Doña Luisa de Carvajal ha pasado una gran tormenta estos dias. . . . La prendieron en una casilla que tiene a la orilla desta ciudad."

as quickly as possible. Sarmiento coolly replied that Doña Luisa would no doubt be willing to leave the country if the king wished it, but that if she did so he would leave England too. His audacity was crowned with complete success. James climbed down, and ordered Doña Luisa to be set at liberty immediately.

The outcome of this affair greatly strengthened Sarmiento's position, and he soon began to take a more hopeful view of the situation. He did not think it would be hard to win over James. He considered the king by no means severe or inspired by animosity against the Catholics, but held that he was led astray by the evil influence of "bishops and bad counsellors."* The Carvajal affair had inspired his easy and tolerant nature with a respect and liking for Sarmiento, and he happened one day to express the opinion, in the presence of several courtiers, that the new ambassador was honest and trustworthy. The Scotchman Hay hastened to warn him that "with Spaniards it was necessary to be prudent," reminding him of the success with which the Spanish envoy Zuniga had fooled the English Court. James, however, continued to champion Sarmiento. The story was repeated to the ambassador, and encouraged him to further efforts in the Catholic cause. The queen showed her sympathy at once. Sarmiento visited her at Oatlands not long after he had landed, and formed the most favourable impression of her religious

* To the Marquis de los Velez, December, 1613. "Sus obispos y malos consejeros que andan cerca del."

views.* It is probable that she was ready, not merely to tolerate Catholicism, but to see it made the established creed of England. She was, however, a frivolous woman with no great influence over her husband or anybody else, and her sympathy was valuable chiefly because the Catholic priests, who were endeavouring to make proselytes under the ægis of Sarmiento, found it useful to be able to throw the weight of her name into the balance of conversion. The cause of Catholic toleration made enormous strides. In December, 1613, 400 Englishmen, of whom fifty were prominent persons, attended mass in Sarmiento's chapel, and in the following month the building was crowded for a service held in memory of Doña Luisa de Carvajal, who had died shortly after her release.† At Easter of 1615 between 800 and 900 persons received the Sacrament in the chapel. As Sarmiento's influence with the king grew stronger, he was able not only to secure for the English Catholics the opportunity of attending mass in his chapel, but to obtain good treatment for those who were imprisoned. In May, 1615, Somerset, still all-powerful, undertook on Sarmiento's behalf to secure good treatment for those Catholics who were in prison. When Somerset fell, Sarmiento's own influence had become strong enough for him to champion their cause without the assistance of the favourite, and in March, 1616, he

* To the Bishop of Valladolid. "La Reyna es muy bien inclinada à nuestra religion."

† To Inojosa. "Tambien estuvo la capilla lleva de catolicos Ingleses . . . cosa que no se ha visto otra vez en Inglaterra."

was able to write to Lerma that, during the three years of his embassy, no one had been executed for a religious cause. In the autumn of 1616 we find him assuming the position of lord of the Catholic Church in England, and depriving of their pensions all English Catholics who took the oath of allegiance to James.* In July of the following year an incident occurred which admirably illustrates the strength of the Spanish ambassador's position, and the genuineness of the protection which his presence in England afforded to the Catholics. When James was passing through York the sheriff complained of the behaviour of the Catholics of his district, and said that he thought the best way to make them do what they were told was to send them the orders to their own houses, and if they did not appear pull their houses down. The king, indignant at the recital, ordered the sheriff to do this, whereupon the sheriff published a decree very antagonistic to the Catholics. The Spanish ambassador immediately complained to the Council, who summoned the sheriff to London, and imprisoned him on the ground that he had exceeded his privileges.†

Sarmiento saw that the cause of English Catholicism might be furthered by other and less direct methods. He held that in a contest between two religious creeds the side which had control of the sources of theological learning would possess a considerable advantage. Accordingly, he employed agents to obtain manuscripts and libraries for the

* Lionello to Doge, October 7, 1616.

† To Philip III., July, 1617.

Catholics. His zeal in this task was quickened by his own keen interest in literature and scholarship, to which the fine library in his house at Valladolid bore witness. In the years 1613 and 1614 two notable collections of books came into the market, owing to the death of Sir Thomas Bodley and Isaac Casaubon. Sarmiento had not arrived in England when Bodley died, and he was disappointed to find the whole of his treasures taken over by the University of Oxford. He deeply regretted that he had not been sent to England a few months earlier, in order to prevent such a magnificent collection from passing into the possession of heretics. In the following year Casaubon died, and Sarmiento, hoping to obtain consolation for his disappointment over Bodley's collection, immediately asked permission to inspect the library with a view to buying it. James, however, did not wish the country to lose so valuable a collection, and he sent the Bishop of Winchester to make an inventory of the manuscripts, and seal them up. In spite of these two failures, Sarmiento succeeded in obtaining many documents of various degrees of utility and interest, some of which were, he said, originals, and very scarce.* He is said by the pamphleteer Scott to have suggested that "an especial eye should be had upon the library of Sir Robert Cotton, an engrosser of antiquities, that whensoever it came to be broken up, either before his death or after, the most choice and singular pieces might be gleaned and gathered up by a Catholic hand." His own declaration of

* To the Bishop of Pampeluna, September, 1617.

the objects which he hoped to obtain is worthy of notice.

"Neither let any man think," he said, "that descending thus low to petty particulars is unworthy an ambassador, or of small avail for the ends we aim at, since we see every mountain consists of several sands, and there is not more profitable conversing for statesmen than among scholars and their books. . . . Besides, if by any means we can continue differences in their Church, or make them wider, or beget distaste betwixt their clergy and common lawyers, who are men of greatest power in their land, the benefit will be ours, the consequence great, opening a way for us to come in between, for personal quarrels produce real questions."*

The efforts of Sarmiento to defend Spanish trade against English attacks were more persistent than successful.† The seafaring classes had been educated in the tradition of Drake and Raleigh, according to which a Spanish merchantman was a lawful prize even in times of peace, and they were unwilling to abandon a tradition which forcibly appealed to their patriotism, their conscience, and their pockets. Queen Elizabeth had looked favourably upon the system, and James, though ready to satisfy Sarmiento as far as possible, was naturally reluctant to exert himself in suppressing a practice which was both popular and lucrative. Attempted reprisals by the Spaniards had served only to embitter the anti-Spanish feeling of the commercial classes—notably in the cases of the *Trial* and *Vineyard*. Sarmiento

* Narrative of Embassy, 1618.

† To Inojosa, October, 1613. "Uno de los mayores trabajos que tiene esta embajada es encaminar los negocios tocantes a las presas de mar que hacen a los vasallos de Su Majestad los piratas que salen deste reino."

could do nothing but protest, and he protested vigorously whenever fresh news of an English act of piracy arrived.

In October, 1613, the arrival of ships from the East Indies with booty valued at over 1,000,000 crowns, stirred him to violent indignation. He declared that it had been taken from the Portuguese, and demanded restitution, which, as his accusations lacked material support, he naturally failed to obtain.* A month later he forwarded to James a general statement of commercial grievances —"matters pertaining to merchants, and things taken from ships." No redress was forthcoming, although Sarmiento continued to force the matter upon James's notice. He told the Venetian ambassador in 1614 that the only two things which were of importance to his king were the affairs of the Indies, and those of Germany and the neighbouring country. The continued failure of the representations of their ambassador induced the Spaniards to take the law into their own hands, and in August, 1615, an English ship with a rich cargo and 40,000 crowns in specie was detained at Seville, and her cargo confiscated.

A reprisal of this nature, however, was nothing but a pin-prick. Sarmiento was contending with forces which were far beyond his control. On one side was an enterprising nation of seamen seeking outlets for its trade. The spirit of adventure was still alive which had inspired Sir Francis Drake as he headed for the setting sun, with an offshore wind

* Foscarini to Doge.

filling the sails, and Mount Edgecumbe, far astern, fading into the mists that lay along the northern horizon. On the other was an inflated empire, with vague pretensions to the control of a seaboard which it could not possibly guard, whose legendary wealth was an irresistible temptation to the English trader. The northern littoral of South America was ineffectively guarded by Spain, and a thriving commerce was carried on by the English, viewed by the Spaniards with impotent wrath. In 1616 Sarmiento reported that two English vessels had returned home loaded with campeachy wood from Brazil. He indignantly added that the Brazilian coast was abandoned, and that if the King of Spain would do nothing to remedy this, it would be sacked by the English. The ambassador's comments on the commercial situation in the Indies are everywhere more vehement than hopeful. He was, however, destined to enjoy what seemed to him a signal vindication of the political and commercial rights of Spain, when, three years later, the last great exponent of the Elizabethan tradition perished on the scaffold.

Sarmiento relied on another factor which would, he hoped, prevent James from helping the Dutch and the Duke of Savoy. This factor was the growing coolness between the king and his Parliaments. During the session of the "Addled" or "Undertakers" Parliament, in the summer of 1614, he wrote to the Spanish ambassador in Flanders describing the discord between the king and the Commons and the reluctance of the latter to vote

supplies.* The flame of discord was skilfully fanned by Sarmiento, who listened sympathetically to James's complaints against the Parliament, and hinted at the good fortune of his own master in being free from such an encumbrance. It was, in fact, largely through the ambassador's influence that James refrained for several years from summoning a Parliament. In consequence he got no money, and could not afford to help the enemies of Spain. He afterwards declared that "therein lies one of the chiefest services I have done, in working such a dislike between the king and the Lower House that the king will never endure Parliament again, but will rather suffer absolute want than receive conditional relief from his subjects."†

* "Las cosas del parlamento del aqui han comencado a encreparse y haber borrascas, y hasta ayora no han concedido al Rey un maravedi."

† Narrative of Embassy, 1618.

CHAPTER III

ITALY AND THE LOW COUNTRIES

James pressed to break with Spain—Hitch in French marriage negotiations—Spinola seizes Wesel—James as peacemaker—Growing distrust of England—Treaties of Xanten and Asti—Sarmiento's attitude—Spanish marriage proposals revived—Success of his policy.

THE general trend of European politics in 1613 and 1614 was decidedly anti-Spanish, and it was clear that all Sarmiento's diplomatic resource would be required if he was to keep England from joining the ranks of the enemies of Spain. The Duke of Savoy was imploring James to give him active assistance against the Spaniards in Italy, and was receiving the moral support of Venetian diplomacy. The Dutch were urging him to assume the headship of a great Protestant league which would cripple the Spanish power in Europe. At the same time, the negotiations for the French marriage were rapidly nearing a conclusion.

Sarmiento's policy was to keep James from fulfilling the hopes of Charles Emanuel and Prince Maurice of Orange, and to strain every nerve to stop the French match. For this purpose he was to revive the Spanish marriage scheme. At this period the Spanish marriage was taken seriously by nobody

in Spain ; it was simply a device to keep France and England apart ;* this object once accomplished, countless objections to the marriage would spring up, and the negotiations would be dropped until it was found a diplomatic necessity to renew them. Soon after he landed Sarmiento suggested the marriage of Prince Charles to the younger Infanta, taking care to promise a dowry in excess of that offered by France. He was at this period perfectly resigned to the success of the French negotiations, which, like everybody else, he imagined to be near their conclusion. The Earl of Lennox, in fact, and some of James's other Scotch advisers, were eager to bring matters to a head by publishing the conclusion of the marriage treaty. Sarmiento determined to play a losing game as well as he could, and in February, 1614, in a private interview, he pressed his arguments on the queen, declaring that the Most Catholic King would give four times as much dowry as the King of France. The queen immediately wrote to her husband, laying before him Sarmiento's proposals. The only result of her mediation was a frigid reply from James that "if the Spanish ambassador wished to speak of this he should do so through the ordinary channels." Having administered a snub to his wife and Sarmiento, he sent for the French ambassador, and told him the whole story. Sarmiento's efforts being apparently doomed to failure, Lerma approached the French ambassador at Madrid with

* To Bedmar, June, 1614. The object of the Spanish proposal was, he said, "detener y alargar lo de Francia."

the ingenuous argument that a marriage between an English prince and a French princess would not be to the interests of France. Nevertheless, the hitch in the negotiations, which took place in the summer of 1614, was due, not to the diplomatic efforts of Spain, but to the split in France between the queen-mother and the princes of the blood and the withdrawal of the latter from Paris. James was not anxious to conclude a marriage treaty with a country which was torn by faction, and the negotiations immediately hung fire.

In the Low Countries everything pointed to the renewal of war. The Spanish commander, Spinola, as a measure of retaliation for the Dutch occupation of Juliers, took possession of Wesel. The Dutch were loud in their complaints, and were eager for war with Spain, relying upon the help of England and the German Princes of the Union. Sarmiento was determined that they should not get English help. Accordingly, in company with Boischot, he set about the task of keeping James quiet. James was at first intractable, and raved against Spain with the vehemence of a Raleigh or a Winwood. Sarmiento, however, knew his man. He had no objection to standing in the audience-chamber and letting James abuse him and his master for an hour, if he could be sure that the king's indignation would expend itself, as it usually did, in words. For some months he patiently listened to royal harangues against Spain, which he either received with silence or turned aside with a compliment. He understood that the best way to

conciliate James was by an appeal to his vanity, and he gradually induced James to think that his rôle was that of pacific mediator in the Low Countries and in Italy. This pleased the king and infuriated the Dutch, while it suited the policy of Spain, which was to spin out the negotiations for as long as possible while Spinola fortified Wesel and consolidated his position in the Netherlands. Sarmiento, though he was ready to use the arts of conciliation in his dealings with James, took a very different line with his fellow-ambassadors, whom he preferred to overawe by accounts of the strength and enormous resources of Spain, and of her determination to make no concession to the Dutch. He declared that Spain would never allow the Dutch to keep Juliers, and that if they helped Brandenburg, Spain would help Neuburg, who had just stereotyped the religious nature of the quarrel by his conversion to Catholicism—a step which gained for him the assistance of the Archduke Albert and intensely annoyed James. Sarmiento also enlarged in conversation with Foscarini upon the number of troops which his master could pour into the Low Countries, doubtless hoping that his words would be repeated to Caron, the Dutch representative. Caron was equally defiant. It was not the custom of his masters, he declared, to say "Fiat voluntas tua" except to God in the Lord's Prayer, and certainly not to Spain.

By June, 1614, James was declaring that the Dutch had put everything in his hands, and announcing his intention of effecting a settlement by himself. The

rôle of peacemaker was that which he loved above all others, and he played it during the next three years to his own infinite satisfaction, to the content of the Spaniards, and to the indignation of the States-General and the Duke of Savoy. To the latter he sent a sum of money, but no further help, though he allowed a small number of troops to be levied. This elicited a protest from Sarmiento, who declared that "no one wished to oppress the Duke." James was a furnace of virtuous indignation. He burst out into a violent tirade, declaring that the Spanish ambassador in Venice had said that the Governor of Milan wished to chastise the Duke, and asked what authority the governor possessed over the Duke, a free sovereign prince, and dependent on no one. Sarmiento, who was apparently not eager to champion Inojosa, took refuge in silence. James went on to complain of the action of Spinola in seizing Wesel and Aix-la-Chapelle. Sarmiento contended that the Dutch, by throwing a garrison into Juliers, had been the first to attack, and that Spinola had moved by necessity against Aix, out of consideration for the Emperor. James, not in the least pacified, retorted that he knew quite well that Spinola had orders to take Emden, as well as all the places of Cleves, and that the fortification of Wesel was not a sign of a wish to restore it. Sarmiento produced a letter from the Archduke Albert, guaranteeing the restoration of the places in Cleves if the Dutch would do the same in Juliers, and withdrew. During this interview James grew so angry that Lennox and some other

gentlemen who were in the ante-chamber came to the door of the royal apartment. Next day Boischot tried his hand at soothing the indignant monarch, and reiterated, on behalf of his master, the Archduke, the assurances given by the Spanish ambassador. James's anger had, as usual, evaporated, and he readily accepted Boischot's declaration, attributing it, with characteristic self-satisfaction, to his threats of war and his plain speaking to Sarmiento.* If James was contented with the assurances of Spain and the Archduke, the States-General put no faith whatever in them. The Duke of Savoy, too, was growing sceptical as to the genuine quality of English promises, and in the autumn of 1614 he sent to England as his agent the Count of Scarnafes. Scarnafes was a man of considerable ability and unwearying activity, an enthusiastic servant of the Duke, and consumed by a violent hatred of Spain. A community of aims led to an intimacy between him and Foscarini, on which Sarmiento looked with no friendly eye. Sarmiento, however, had taken James's measure, and in October he informed his colleague at Rome that the efforts of Scarnafes would obtain nothing from James except advice not to disturb the peace. The Duke of Savoy, nevertheless, wrote a fulsome letter, obviously inspired less by gratitude for the meagre services rendered in the past than by a hope of extracting assistance from James in the future by judicious flattery. He thanked James for the warmth which he had shown in protecting his affairs,

* Foscarini to Doge, October, 1614.

and declared that he himself would respond by spending everything he had in the world in his service.*

James, in the meantime, was engaged upon a task which flattered his self-importance, and gave him an excellent excuse for giving no help to the Dutch or to Savoy. He was arranging for the pacification of Europe. The autumn of 1614 and the summer of 1615 witnessed the erection of two characteristically unenduring monuments of Jacobean diplomacy—the Treaties of Xanten and Asti. By the Treaty of Xanten, signed in November, 1614, another provisional partition of Cleves and Juliers was made between the claimants, the signatories to the Treaty being France, England, the States-General, and the United Princes of Germany. The fact that the Emperor and the Archduke Albert were not among the signatories did not strike James as likely to impair the efficacy of the agreement. Both Emperor and Archduke, however, immediately repudiated it, and the diplomatic history of 1615 is a chronicle of futile attempts by James to get the treaty carried out, bland assurances by Sarmiento and Boischot, and efforts by the Dutch to persuade James that the non-execution of the treaty ought to be regarded as a *casus belli*. Sarmiento simply wanted to gain time. When James was particularly intractable, he flattered him with the prospect of the Spanish marriage. He knew how to hold the balance between conciliation and firmness. At the end of 1614 he wrote suggesting that Lerma

* Foscarini to Doge, November 28, 1614.

should express to Digby his confidence in England, but display at the same time a proper resentment at the attention paid by James to the complaints of Maurice, which were nothing but inventions.*

In January, 1615, a settlement in the Low Countries seemed as remote as ever. Spinola had proposed to Maurice to supersede or supplement the provisions of Xanten by a mutual evacuation of the disputed territory. Maurice, who distrusted Spinola as much as that commander distrusted him, objected to the form of words put before him. Sarmiento and Boischot promised that if satisfactory words could be found, Wesel and the other towns should be restored. James then said that he would find the necessary words, and asked the ambassadors to sign a document embodying the verbal assurances which they had given. This they declined to do. James lost his temper, and accused them roundly of deceiving him, to which Sarmiento, with a fine assumption of righteous anger, replied that he would leave His Majesty's kingdom at the first hint. James proceeded to draw up articles for Maurice and Spinola to sign, but, as the Venetian ambassador reported to his Government at the end of the month, it was quite clear that they would not be accepted. On February 1 Sarmiento informed the Council that the King of Spain had given orders for the restoration of Wesel. James was annoyed and suspicious, having received information from

* "El Duque de Lerma hablara al Embajador . . . mostrando confianza del y junto con esto algun sentimiento de que su Rey diese ordos y creditos . . . à las invenciones del Conde Mauricio."

Madrid which was quite inconsistent with the professions of Sarmiento, and, early in February, after one of the ambassador's audiences, James "excitedly swore three or four times by the living God that he could place no trust in him, with other words to the same effect."* All this time in Madrid Lerma was besieging Digby with complaints and assurances, to which the English ambassador paid no attention whatever. The Duke, after laying before Digby a lengthy catalogue of Charles Emanuel's misdeeds, urged that James ought not to support him, but allow him to be punished, as he had involved Spain in great expense in Italy. At the same time Digby reported that men were being levied and money raised as if for immediate hostilities, and in April Spain had nearly 40,000 men under arms in Italy. The unguarded utterances of his chief must have been a source of some embarrassment to Sarmiento, who had been taking a totally different line with James in discussing Savoy. He was, too, annoyed at the tactless manner in which Inojosa had handled the situation. He told Foscarini that the Governor of Milan was no good either for peace or war; he had put his king in a difficult position, and proved incapable of doing anything worthy of note with great forces at his command. Sarmiento, in fact, was anxious at this time to obtain a peaceful settlement in Italy, and he wrote to Philip and Lerma expressing this view. In the summer of 1615, after long negotiations, in which the English representative, Carleton, played a

* Foscarini to Doge, February 13, 1615.

highly creditable part, the Treaty of Asti, providing for a mutual disarmament, was signed. This Treaty, however, proved scarcely more permanent than the Treaty of Xanten.

The States-General were fast losing patience with James. The ambassador of the Prince of Brandenburg put the situation in a nutshell by declaring in audience at Newmarket that the two things required were a decision and effective assistance. He added that but for James's advice Wesel would have been saved. It is unnecessary to say that a decision and effective assistance were the two things which nothing would induce James to give. Carleton, at Venice, tried to commit his Government to definite action by a long "exposition of British policy," declaring the necessity for giving active help to Savoy, a proceeding which displeased James, who had already rebuked Carleton for proposing a Venetian league with England. James continued to shuffle, and the indignant ambassador of Brandenburg followed him about England, only to be refused audience on the pretext of pressure of business. The Dutch were astonished at the king's credulity in listening to Sarmiento. The ambassador gave an illustration of his master's attitude towards the States by his refusal to appear in the company of the Dutch ambassador at the performance of the Court masque, Ben Jonson's "Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists." Caron was naturally indignant, and received the sympathy of most of his colleagues, although Sarmiento declared to Philip that the other ambassadors approved of

his conduct in the matter. At the same time he continued to assure James that restitution would be made. Caron, on the other hand, refused to believe Wesel would be given up, and prophesied that by Easter a great body of troops would have been collected, and a blow would be struck.* In April James was stirred once more to impotent anger by a Spanish attempt on Goch, Syburg, and other places. The ambassador of Brandenburg complained bitterly, and hinted that James should give Sarmiento and Boischot their passports and declare war. James was not prepared to do this, but the incident gave a strong anti-Spanish turn to his diplomacy, and at the beginning of May he was busy planning a huge European combination against Spain, consisting of the States-General and the German princes on the north, and Venice and Savoy on the south, with the cantons of Zurich and Berne and the confederation of the Grisons as the connecting link. He wrote a letter to the Confederation of the Grisons, exhorting them to imitate Zurich and Berne, and form a league with Venice. There was, too, about this time a violent outbreak of anti-Spanish panic in London. It was rumoured that an armada was being prepared in Seville for a descent on England or Ireland, and the Bishop of London made it the subject of his sermon on Palm Sunday. Sarmiento attempted to counterbalance the anti-Spanish tendencies of the king by pushing the marriage negotiations rather more vigorously. He had received instructions in the previous winter to keep them up, and to get

* Foscarini to Doge, March 27, 1615.

Somerset on to his side in order that the religious difficulties might be smoothed over. In May James told Sarmiento that the only part of the Spanish conditions which he objected to was that which stipulated for the bringing up of all the children of the marriage as Roman Catholics, and that he thought some might be of one religion and some of the other.* Among the other conditions of the articles which James declared himself willing to accept were the suspension of the penal laws and the institution of a public Roman Catholic Church, whose ecclesiastics might wear their garb in the streets, while another clause provided that the children of the marriage should not be debarred from succeeding to the throne on account of their Catholicism. It is astonishing that any sane Englishman should have taken these proposals seriously. Digby, however, was apparently in favour of the marriage at this time. He subsequently expressed the opinion that the prince had better marry a Protestant, but it would seem that in 1615 his anxiety to maintain good relations with Spain had made him an advocate of the match. At any rate, Sarmiento paid a tribute to his services in the cause of the marriage in a despatch to Philip, while his apparent zeal aroused the indignation of that vehement anti-Spaniard, Sir Ralph Winwood, who complained of Digby's conduct in "interfering as a youth without wisdom or experience."† Sarmiento's confidence in Digby was not shared by

* To Philip III., May 16, 1615.

† *Ibid.*

James, who told the ambassador that he could not speak openly to Digby about the religious part of the affair, as he was a member of the Puritan party.

Sarmiento's eagerness to push forward the negotiations was increased by an unexpected *volte face* on the part of James, who suddenly resumed the negotiations for the French marriage. The Venetian ambassador, in reporting this to his masters, observed that it had caused Sarmiento to reopen the question of the Spanish match.* He was evidently unaware of the negotiations which had been going on in the early part of the summer. James's inclination towards the French marriage was only a passing mood, and when Sir Robert Cotton suggested to him that he should keep both sets of negotiations going at once, he received the grandiloquent reply that the king "was not a merchant to haggle, nor was it in his honour to do so."

Sarmiento held in July, 1615, an optimistic view of the situation. He saw that his diplomacy had paralysed the Protestant enemies of Spain by keeping their natural leaders inactive, while he had to a great extent conquered the anti-Spanish prejudices of the Court, and had made the toleration of the English Catholics a certainty for years to come. He skilfully utilised the growing constitutional discord to help his policy, and reported to his master that James was now in a dilemma, for if he did not protect his Catholics, "England will soon be a republic, as Calvin's maxims advise."† He had

* Foscarini to Doge, June 27, 1615.

† To Philip III., July, 1615.

gained another point by inducing the young prince to like Spain and take an interest in Spanish things, a matter in which the queen's influence was thrown into the scale in favour of Sarmiento. The only question which troubled him during this summer was the English system of espionage, of which he believed that Digby pulled the strings. He complained that his despatches were read, and that papers were extracted from Lerma's private bureau in Madrid. He also declared that Winwood was in correspondence with several persons in Madrid, and that there were English spies in San Sebastian, Lisbon, and Seville. Lerma was inclined to discredit Sarmiento's reports; he refused to believe that anybody could tamper with his private bureau, of which he always kept the key himself, and suggested that the people who supplied Digby with news might be frauds. He reminded Sarmiento that Digby had more than once furnished the English Government with inaccurate information.

The situation in August, 1615, afforded little satisfaction to the opponents of Spain, and reflected small credit on James. The Treaty of Xanten was a dead-letter. The Dutch were disgusted with James, and eager to go to war without waiting any longer for English help, although Winwood had told Sarmiento in June that the Dutch would be glad to continue the truce—that is, the Treaty of Xanten.* France seemed likely to be split once more by internal

* To Philip III., June, 1615. "Los Olandeses se holgarian de continuar la tregua por algunos anos mas y que ayora seria muy facil."

struggles. On August 13 Foscarini, in an excellent summary of the condition of France, informed his Government that the princes of the blood had an understanding with "the Parliament" (the French States-General) and the religious malcontents, and that they were anxious to prevent the carrying out of the marriage treaty between France and Spain. James, anxious to secure the same object, in June appealed to the queen-mother, pointing out that the marriages would alienate from France the Netherlands, the German Princes of the Union, and Savoy. Nevertheless, Foscarini prophesied that Spain would triumph. Either she would conclude the marriage treaties and get the French alliance, which would make her all-powerful in Europe, or disturbances would take place in France, and the most dangerous enemy of Spain would be made powerless.* In any case, France had evidently no intention of fulfilling her promises made at Xanten, and early in August the Dutch ambassador in Paris expressed grave fears on this point. James's diplomacy was largely responsible for this. The French were anxious to have nothing to do with any negotiations conducted by James, because they were quite sure that they would come to nothing, and they did not wish to be made look ridiculous. Sarmiento, too, while keeping James amused with the marriage negotiations, continued to maintain in his conversation with his fellow-ambassadors a haughty and aggressive attitude towards the States-General. His king, he said, now had four armies idle, and the

* Foscarini to Doge, August 13, 1615.

fleet at Seville, with 20,000 men on board, whom Philip did not know how to employ because he was at peace with all the world.* In Italy, in the meantime, the Treaty of Asti had brought about a temporary cessation of hostilities. The Duke of Savoy immediately began to disarm, but Don Pedro of Toledo, who succeeded Inojosa at the end of 1615, would not follow suit, and when in November war broke out between Venice and the Archduke Ferdinand — the *casus belli* being the attacks on Venetian commerce by the Dalmatian pirates known as Uscochi—Charles Emanuel stopped disarming, and appealed to the Powers which had guaranteed the Treaty of Asti.

* Foscarini to Doge, August 6, 1615.

CHAPTER IV

JAMES IN THE TOILS

Fall of Somerset—Lake, Roos, and Cottington—Sarmiento's growing influence—Spanish marriage further discussed—Sarmiento's health—Count of Gondomar—Digby sent to Madrid—Gondomar's views on the marriage—English hatred of Spain.

THE winter of 1615-16 witnessed the greatest and most unsavoury Court scandal which had taken place for many years. The fall of Somerset would have exercised a most prejudicial influence upon Spanish interests at James's Court had Spain been represented by a less successful ambassador. The details of Overbury's murder, and the trial of Somerset and his countess—the divorced wife of the Earl of Essex—it is unnecessary to discuss. The importance of these events from the Spanish point of view lies in the influence which they had, or were expected to have, upon the position of Sarmiento at Court. In the autumn of 1615 the clouds were gathering, and though Sarmiento wrote hopefully in October that almost all the nobility were on his side, a joint letter to the Doge from the outgoing Venetian ambassador and his successor Barbarigo, a fortnight later, declared that dissension and hatred were continually on the increase at Court. In December

Barbarigo reported that the fall of Somerset was expected to cause grave prejudice to the affairs of Spain at the Court. Sarmiento had not, however, been unwise enough to make Somerset the cornerstone of Spanish influence at the English Court. He understood that a Court favourite to a great extent stands alone, owing to the jealousy which his rapid and often unmerited rise to power excites, and that, when a change of fortune overtakes him, his fall is both swift and complete.

Sarmiento had found Somerset's friendship and influence exceedingly useful, but he had been astute enough at the same time to make friends with men whose position at Court was not wholly dependent on that of the favourite. Sir Thomas Lake became Secretary early in January, 1616. He was an official of the new type which was springing up—a man of few principles and little patriotism, always anxious to be on the winning side, and ready to turn his position of trust to his own pecuniary advantage. He was intimate with Sarmiento, and had become one of his pensioners. He possessed a termagant daughter, who was married to the young Lord Roos, another devoted adherent of the ambassador. The scandalous conduct of Lady Roos afterwards involved Lake and his family in disaster and disgrace. The ambassador welcomed his appointment to the secretaryship, hoping that he might act as a *contrepoids* to Winwood, who violently attacked Lake as a Catholic and a pensioner of Spain.*

Another instrument of Sarmiento was the in-

* To Philip III., January 30, 1616.

triguing time-server Francis Cottington. This able but untrustworthy courtier had been a supporter of the Spanish marriage ever since his appointment as Clerk of the Council in 1613, and when, in January, 1616, Digby was recalled to England to give information with regard to Somerset's treasonable correspondence with Spain, Sarmiento viewed with satisfaction the nomination of Cottington as English agent at Madrid. He understood that Cottington was not a man in whom unlimited confidence could be put, although he had given valuable information in the past concerning the affairs of France and the Netherlands. Before he sailed for Spain he placed himself unreservedly in Sarmiento's hands. He declared that he was a Catholic, and an unswerving supporter of the Spanish match, and that if the marriage was not concluded in such a way that he might live in England as a Catholic, he meant to live and die in Spain in a desert. Sarmiento was sceptical as to the value of Cottington's professions, describing him as "a most subtle and crafty man."*

The position of Sarmiento at the English Court in the early months of 1616 was remarkable, and rested almost entirely upon the strong personal influence which he exercised over James. There was no doubt whatever in the mind of anyone at Court that he was carrying on a system of bribery and espionage. "Every day," wrote Barbarigo to the Doge in January, "they discover fresh evidence of the ill offices performed by the Spanish ambassador

* To Lerma, January, 1616.

resident here."* Sir Robert Cotton was placed under arrest for revealing to him the contents of a State document, and in March Digby arrived in England thirsting for the blood of the Spanish pensioners. He endeavoured to stir up James to take strong measures against them, indicating Monson, Northampton, and Salisbury as especially suitable objects for the royal indignation; but at the same time he remained on excellent terms with Sarmiento, and the king himself now treated the Spanish ambassador as his most intimate friend. On April 11, when the agitation against the pensioners was in full swing, Sarmiento dined with James, and received the exceptional honour of leading the queen by the hand on her arrival and departure.† He was now pushing the marriage negotiations with renewed vigour, and the prospects of the English Catholics seemed brighter than at any time during the reign. Not a single person, Sarmiento wrote in March of this year, had been executed for a religious cause since he came to England. The discussion of the marriage continued through the spring and summer, neither side having any apparent conception of the obstacles which had to be surmounted, both in England and Spain, before such a scheme could have any real chance of success. The Spanish theologians were totally ignorant, and Sarmiento either ignorant or contemptuous of the strength of the anti-Catholic feeling in England, while James did not attach sufficient importance to

* To Lerma, January, 1616.

† To Philip III., April 27, 1616.

the attitude of the Pope, who was not inclined to allow the match except on conditions which no sane man in England would have dreamt of accepting. At present, however, Sarmiento had not begun to regard the marriage as either probable or desirable. That he did so regard it later is almost certain. In the spring of 1616 it was, to him, simply a pawn in the game which he was playing against the insistent Dutch and the even more insistent Scarnafes. In March Viscount Fenton secretly interviewed Sarmiento at the king's request with reference to the marriage, and Sarmiento paid a number of visits to the queen, once remaining in conversation with her for five hours, while on another occasion one of his household was observed coming from the queen's apartments with a small picture under his cloak. Shortly after this James told Scarnafes that some proposals for marriage had been made to him from Spain, but that he could not listen to any other proposals before the negotiations with France were completed. If these came to nothing he would be ready to listen to other proposals, but before deciding he would inform and consult the States and his other allies.*

In the summer Hay was sent to Paris to negotiate for the French marriage. What this wavering on James's part meant is by no means clear. Possibly he hoped to get better terms from Spain by reviving the prospect of the French marriage, but whatever he may have hoped he gained nothing by it. Sarmiento absolutely declined to allow Spain to appear

* Barbarigo to Dogs, March 19, 1616.

in competition with France for the English alliance. Adopting his familiar air of hauteur, he declared that the Spanish negotiations were no longer being carried on, as James had hanged a priest who had escaped from prison. This showed, he said, that England was so hostile to the Catholic religion that the Infanta could not be given to James, and even if his master wished to give her, the people of Spain would not permit it.* His windy protestations would have had little effect on a more independent and courageous king. James, however, gave way completely. Hay was recalled, and the Spanish pensioner, Lord Roos, was appointed ambassador at Madrid, though he does not appear to have received instructions to discuss the marriage treaty with Lerma.

The foreign allies of England were in despair. The Venetians had complained in April that the Spaniards in Italy were not disarming, and appealed to James to help them to enforce the Treaty of Asti. James, through Winwood, replied that, although he would perform every good office for Venice, it was not convenient for him to make war on the Spaniards. The Duke of Savoy was furious with James, while the endeavours of Scarnafes to obtain English help were invariably checkmated by Sarmiento's influence. The unfortunate agent of Savoy was continually put off by James upon the most childish pretexts. Whenever he tried to obtain an audience the king was unwell, or busy, or out hunting. At

* Lionello to Doge, July 22, 1616.

last, in despair, he drew up a long document entreating James to fulfil his obligations and uphold the Treaty of Asti, and took it to Winwood, who received him kindly, but advised him not to present the document, "because, being the length of a sheet, His Majesty would never read it for the half of his kingdom." The States-General swelled the indignant chorus. "If this other marriage takes place," said Prince Maurice, "we shall be hedged about on every side." Caron, with insight greater than that of his master, saw that Spain wanted the negotiations rather than the marriage, and that what Sarmiento was aiming at was to widen the breach between England and the States-General. His proposal that Flanders should be opened to English cloth, which had formerly gone to Zeeland, was an open attempt to sow discord. The Venetian Secretary, Lionello, regarded the conclusion of the marriage as certain. "We are forced to believe," he wrote, "that England for at least two or three generations will separate from this good union, and will join the other side. . . . They want money, and that is the chief reason which attracts them to the Spaniards." This was not far from the truth. James was in great financial straits, owing to his disinclination to summon a Parliament. Even if his subservience to the Spanish ambassador had not made him break his word to his allies, it is doubtful whether he could have given them any effective help. Occasionally his conscience seemed to have pricked him; in November, for instance, he com-

plained feebly of the way in which Spain was treating Savoy—Don Pedro, of Toledo, Inojosa's successor, having invaded Piedmont two months before. Sarmiento threw the blame on Savoy, and finding James still unconvinced, proceeded to enlarge on the King of England's influence with his master, and the esteem which the latter felt for James.

Despite his personal success at the English Court, Sarmiento was weary of his task, and anxious to return to Spain. Time had not softened his antipathy to the English as a race, or to their customs and their climate, though he confessed that the latter was healthy for those who had been born and bred in it. His health was far from good; he suffered, in fact, from an incurable disease. Long before this he had attempted to get his embassy exchanged for that of Paris, but without success, and throughout the summer of 1616 he was besieging his Government with appeals for permission to return. In April he drew up a list of subjects which he professed himself anxious to discuss personally with Philip. He wished, he said, to inform his master of the bad state of Irish affairs, of James's opinion with regard to the Spanish match, and of the designs of the English in the East and West Indies, including Raleigh's proposed voyage, and to give a particular account of English affairs. This leave was not given, the king and Lerma being unwilling to spare one of their most valuable servants. Sarmiento accordingly sent to Spain his confessor, Diego de Lafuente, asking that a successor should

be appointed to relieve him of his embassy, that he should be given a title of nobility, and that he should be sent money, of which he was in terrible need.

Lafuente worked assiduously to further his master's interests, but nothing would induce Lerma to release Sarmiento from his post. On the matter of the title, however, the king and his minister were more accommodating. In the spring of 1617 Sarmiento learnt with satisfaction that the king had granted him a title, but that it could not yet be made public, although it was a settled affair.* Soon afterwards the ambassador received a letter from his master, telling him that he had granted him the title of Count, and bidding him abandon his idea of returning to Spain, as his help was urgently required for the important negotiations which were going on. On April 11 it was announced in the Council at Madrid that the title of Count of Gondomar had been granted to the Most Catholic King's ambassador in England. Lafuente wrote that the news had been well received in Madrid, and congratulated the ambassador on the fact that the title had "not even cost a pair of gloves, much against the usual custom." On June 3 the newly made count replied to Philip in suitable terms, thanking him for the honour bestowed upon him. But although pleased with his success in obtaining the title, he was no less anxious to leave England than he had been at the beginning of Lafuente's mission. His health not only showed no improvement, but had grown worse. In

* Lafuente to Sarmiento, March 29 and April 1, 1617.

January, 1617, he was dangerously ill, and throughout the summer he was unwell and depressed. In July he was unable to go to Scotland with the king, but remained in London under the care of "a famous medical man of the name of Thompson, a native of Suffolk,"* while he continued to appeal for a few months' leave to go to Galicia, declaring that he was still too unwell to leave his house, even in a sedan chair.† His reports of his own condition were evidently coloured by his eagerness to obtain a release, for only a month before he made this statement he visited the Venetian Secretary at his house, and had a long conversation with him. His private affairs, too, demanded his attention. In the late summer of 1617 he received news from Spain that a friend to whom he had entrusted the care of his library at Valladolid had allowed many of his books to be stolen, although he had instructions to show the library to no one, not even to Gondomar's own son.

Gondomar did not allow private worries to mar his diplomacy. James was now determined to carry the marriage negotiations to a finish, both on account of the substantial dowry offered, and from a desire to pose as the great reconciler of nations and creeds. The ideal of a union between the political head of Protestant Europe and the stronghold of Catholicism was fascinating to a man whose statecraft was based on pure theory. The negotiations did not advance perceptibly during 1617, but

* To Lake, July 5, 1617. † To Ciriza, July, 1617.

they were never allowed to hang fire. In March four councillors were appointed to treat with the Spanish ambassador about the match, and Digby was ordered to return to Spain as Extraordinary Ambassador—an appointment which seemed of good augury for the furtherance of the negotiations. The opponents of the marriage regarded Digby as a blind supporter of the Spanish alliance, and Lionello went so far as to declare that his inclinations were just as Spanish as if he had been born a subject of the Most Catholic King. The Venetian's estimate of Digby was very far from the truth. A vehement supporter of the match he certainly had been, but the difficulty presented by the obduracy of the Pope, which seemed to James a matter of small moment, appeared to him as the reef on which the negotiations must infallibly be wrecked. Though not, as James asserted, a Puritan, he was a moderate Anglican, and he held that the only terms which the Pope would tolerate were terms which could not and should not be accepted. However, he was above all things a servant of the Crown, and he sailed for Spain with the intention of obtaining the best possible terms. Gondomar, who understood Digby's real attitude, wrote to Lerma warning him to treat the English ambassador with caution. He pointed out that Digby was a crafty diplomatist, that he knew Madrid well, and that he would leave no stone unturned to obtain secret information. In a significant sentence he impressed upon Lerma the necessity of persuading Digby that the negotiations were

serious. "I hold it for certain that if he finds out that it is not to be, he will leave immediately."

At Court there was now a large majority in favour of the match, and of the Council Winwood and Edmondes alone regarded it with hostility. English policy seemed to be guided entirely by the dark-featured man with the light eyes and ready tongue, who was carried to and from the audience chamber in a chair. The king, at the bidding of an invalid Spaniard, broke his obligations to his allies all over Europe, and made his country's foreign policy an international laughing-stock.

Affairs in the Low Countries had reached a deadlock, as James was now urging the States to take the lead in restoring the occupied towns. Not wishing to alienate James altogether, they returned a noncommittal answer. The policy of James towards Savoy was still more discreditable. He would not intervene himself, but he would not let France intervene instead, and when he learnt from Gondomar, through Winwood, that Savoy and Venice had referred to Philip their respective differences with Don Pedro of Toledo and the Archduke Ferdinand, he was furious. Scarnafes and Lionello both denied all knowledge of the affair, declaring that it was a scheme of Gondomar to divide his enemies. Whether this was so or not, hostilities in Northern Italy were concluded in the course of the year, and Scarnafes was recalled from England.

It would seem that during the summer and autumn

of 1617 Gondomar's views on the marriage underwent a decided change. Early in the year he regarded it as a mere device for keeping James quiet, but it appears that he gradually became persuaded that if it could be successfully carried out it would be to the immense advantage of his Church. In August a rumour was afloat in England that the Infanta was to marry a son of the King of Bohemia. Gondomar did not know whether it was true or not (which shows how little voice he had in the shaping of Spanish policy, which was conducted by the king and Lerma alone); but in any case he did not think it would be advisable to proclaim it, in view of the anxiety of James and "all the best people of England" for a true union with Spain.* In a despatch, dated three months later, he expressed views on the match which show that he had come to regard it as a desirable thing if it were practicable. He would not himself, he said, marry a daughter of his to Prince Charles if he were to continue a heretic, but that if by means of the marriage the Roman Catholic religion could be introduced into England, it would be the most important event that could happen for the benefit of Christianity.† The fact that he was beginning to regard the marriage as a genuine possibility is an excellent illustration of his disregard of popular feeling. For during 1617 the public hatred of Spain and Catholicism was, if anything, augmented. Wild stories of

* To Boischot, September, 1617.

† To Philip III., December 30, 1617.

Spanish designs on England were spread abroad, and the enemies of Spain in the Cabinet, in order to annoy Gondomar, pretended to attach an enormous importance to the most obvious of canards. In this summer, for example, an informer was sent to England by Wotton, the English ambassador at Venice, with a cock-and-bull story of Spanish conspiracies against England. Winwood pretended to believe the story, and went to the length of sending an express courier to James in Scotland with full information of the supposed designs. "These things," wrote Gondomar, "are very common in England."*

The feeling against the marriage was very strong, and would have been stronger but for the rival bogey of the French marriage, which was even more unpopular with many people than the Spanish match. The opinion of this section was voiced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who said that Spain and France were devils, France the black devil, and Spain the white, and that he preferred the marriage with the white devil. Such support as this could possess only a qualified value, and the mass of the people were violently hostile. Gondomar himself speaks of the wholesale mutilation of crosses which took place at this time throughout England—a symptom of the public hatred of Catholicism. When James was on his way back from Scotland he heard that there was an ancient cross in a neighbouring village which was well worth seeing. He went to see it in the company

* To Bedmar, August 3, 1617.

of the sheriff, who told him that he had removed the figure of Christ as being bad and superstitious. In another part of England, when a large figure of Christ was being removed from a cross, it fell and killed two men, an incident which called forth from a cynical observer the comment that "if all the figures of Christ had done as well as this one, they would have treated them with more respect."*

* To Borja, September, 1617.

CHAPTER V

RALEIGH'S LAST VOYAGE

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham—Gondomar on the government of Spain—His recall—His position at Court—James and Raleigh—Gondomar protests against Raleigh's voyage—Failure of the expedition—Gondomar leaves England—Effect of Raleigh's execution.

THE autumn of 1617 saw the rapid rise to favour of George Villiers, Earl, and afterwards Duke, of Buckingham. His career is an instance of the way in which a naturally generous and honourable man can be spoilt by too much prosperity. Buckingham, egotistical, arrogant, unreasonable as he became, retained many fine qualities to the end. At this period his rise was still meeting with opposition in the Council. The proposal that Buckingham's brother should marry the daughter of Sir Edward Coke was met with objections from certain members, whereupon James, infuriated, harangued the Council in violent terms, concluding his speech with the amazing statement that "Christ had His John, and he had his George."*

In this autumn, too, Winwood died. He was a typical second-rate Elizabethan, a permanent official

* To the Archduke Albert, October 12, 1617.

rather than a statesman. Throughout his life he was consumed by a deadly hatred of Spain and the Roman Catholics, which he never attempted to disguise. He loathed the idea of the Spanish match, and among his papers were found documents proving that he had attempted to promote the marriage of Prince Charles to a princess of the House of Brandenburg. Not long before his death he declared, after arresting a Roman Catholic priest, that he would do the same in the Infanta's private chamber if she were in London.

A conversation which Gondomar had earlier in the summer with the Venetian secretary Lionello is worthy of notice. In one of his periodical outbursts of frankness, Gondomar confided to the secretary his dissatisfaction with the way in which the government of Spain was conducted. The preservation and increase of Spain, he said, ought rather to be attributed to the grace of God than to the wisdom of the Council, which was generally governed by so many private interests that serious mistakes were made. He blamed the action of the Governor of Milan for making war on the Duke of Savoy with an army which had been raised for his defence, and described the Governor of Naples, the Duke of Osuna, as a merry-andrew, quoting some jests which had been made at Court when Osuna's appointment was announced. He concluded by saying that if the governors of the States of the Most Catholic King did not cherish the hope that their errors would be supported in Spain by their friends and relations, they would either proceed more

cautiously in assuming an authority which did not belong to them, or they would lose their heads.*

Towards the close of the summer the dramatic flight of Lord Roos from England created some excitement. The late Extraordinary Ambassador in Spain left London hurriedly, crossed to the Continent, and appeared at Rome as a convert with letters of introduction from Gondomar. Some alarm was felt in England, and it was anticipated that Lord Roos's example would be followed by other Englishmen of position and influence. It appeared later that Lord Roos had left England, not from his zeal for Catholicism, but on account of the outrageous treatment to which he was subjected by his wife.

Early in 1618 it was arranged that Gondomar should leave England in the summer. He was delighted at the prospect of returning to Spain, and he knew that he could safely leave English affairs in the hands of a successor. The bonds in which he had enmeshed James would not easily be relaxed ; long after he had landed on Spanish soil, his influence would linger at Whitehall. Gondomar knew that he had stereotyped English policy for some time to come. Reverses were now almost unknown to him. The king was devoted to him, the Spanish alliance, and the marriage scheme which was bound up with it. He publicly declared that if he had a servant who served him as Don Diego Sarmiento served his king he would give him half the kingdom of England.† The queen was still the firm friend of

* Lionello to Doge, June 8, 1617.

† To Philip III., December 30, 1617.

Spain, though she occasionally appeared hostile, in order, as Gondomar thought, to annoy her husband. Early in 1618 he had a long conversation with her, in which she expressed once more her desire for the furtherance of the Spanish marriage and the welfare of the Catholics in England, and there was a jest at Court, enjoyed, if not originated, by James himself, about the lady who was dying for love of Gondomar's light blue eyes.* The queen's health was giving way, however, in the early months of 1618. She was suffering acutely from dropsy; in the middle of January her legs were swollen to a fearful size, and her doctors ordered her to saw wood for some hours daily in order to obtain exercise.† Gondomar himself was not much better; he was unable to walk without difficulty, and had to be carried in a chair from room to room. His mental faculties remained as keen as ever, and at every Court function he was the central figure and favoured guest. The other ambassadors were indignant and jealous, and in January, 1618, the hostility of the French ambassador, Desmarets, led to a dispute on a question of precedence, which was settled in favour of Gondomar. The French ambassador was furious, and prepared to leave England at once. He was, however, taken ill and took to his bed, whence he politely informed Lake, who went to visit him, that every Englishman was a subject and pensioner of the King of Spain. In March he left England.

* To Ciriza, January 3, 1618. "Una Dama muerta de amores por mis ozos zarcos."

† To Ciriza, January 18, 1618.

Desmarets had never been popular at the English Court, and he was treated with studied rudeness to the last. James's present to him on his departure was as meagre as decency allowed, and when the ambassador came for his final audience he was left waiting for three hours before he was admitted to the king's presence.

England had no foreign policy. She was doing nothing for the Dutch, who were shortly to be involved once more in war with Spain as the result of the Elector Frederick's ill-judged efforts to obtain and hold the Bohemian crown. She was doing nothing for the Duke of Savoy, who did not regard the truce of the previous autumn as in any way likely to be the foundation of a lasting peace.* But Gondomar, before he left England, was destined to achieve what he considered the masterstroke of his diplomacy. Subsequent events showed what a knowledge of the English people would have taught him—that his estimate was hopelessly wrong.

The miserable story of Raleigh's last voyage is a record of personal and national discredit, and of all the parties concerned none cut a more sorry figure than James himself. The circumstances which led to the voyage may be briefly retold. Raleigh had visited Guiana in 1595, and had heard the legend of the fabulous kingdom of Eldorado. Far inland, the story ran, behind the Orinoco delta, there was a city built upon an island in a lake ; the city was built of

* To Philip III., March 21, 1618. "El Duque de Saboya escrive a este Rey la poca esperanza que tiene del acomadiamento del paz."

pure gold, and the name of the city or of its emperor was Eldorado. The visions of untold wealth suggested by this fantastic legend were calculated to appeal to European credulity and avarice. It is most unlikely that Raleigh believed in the existence of the golden city, but he was convinced that gold existed in Guiana in large quantities, and his friend, Captain Keymis, declared that he had seen a gold-mine at the junction of the Vagre with the Orinoco. Raleigh had been in the Tower since 1605. He had been condemned to death at Winchester, after a characteristically unfair trial, and reprieved, and Cecil, who was James's chief adviser until his death in 1612, regarding Raleigh as a possible rival to himself and a menace to the public peace, had been glad to see him immured in the Tower for an indefinite period. Anxious to obtain his freedom at all costs, Raleigh determined to hazard everything upon one last throw. He laid his plans before James, promising to bring back gold. It is not clear whether he tried to persuade James of the truth of the Eldorado legend, or whether he merely assured him of the existence of the mine, and undertook to find it. The king, while understanding the extreme delicacy of the situation, adopted a course of action by which he hoped to profit by Raleigh's enterprise, and at the same time to escape all responsibility. It was a selfish and ignoble policy, and it led James by thorny paths to failure and disgrace. He knew that Raleigh's expedition would in all probability come into collision with the Spaniards in the endeavour to find the mine; he knew that if the mine were

found, and a settlement established in the neighbourhood for the purpose of working it, the collision would be inevitable. James had two alternatives before him. The first alternative, which he certainly ought to have adopted, was to stop the expedition. The second was to send the expedition, and if the Spaniards protested, to take the full responsibility upon himself, and openly to deny the claims of the King of Spain to a *mare clausum* in the regions under discussion. This would have been an unscrupulous course, it would have been difficult, it would perhaps have been impolitic ; but it would, with all its defects, have been immeasurably superior to the course which he actually adopted. What James did was to allow Raleigh to sail, under express commands not to invade the territories of the King of Spain, a command which he knew that Raleigh would find it almost impossible to obey, owing to the indefinite extent of the " territories " to which Spain laid claim. James, in fact, accepted the doctrine of the *mare clausum*, and at the same time gave his sanction to an expedition which must inevitably come into direct conflict with that doctrine.

Raleigh spent the summer and autumn of 1616 in preparations for his voyage. It was known as early as April that his objective was the Orinoco, and Gondomar immediately protested. From a Spanish point of view his protests and his suspicions were perfectly justified. In the first place, he denied the right of England to explore in Guiana for mines or for anything else, because it was Spanish

territory; in the second place, he was sceptical as to Raleigh's real object. He firmly believed that Raleigh would either make no attempt to find the mine, but would simply attack Spanish shipping, or go to Guiana and fail to find the mine, in which case he would attempt to console himself and pacify James by bringing home the spoils of the Mexican plate-fleet. On the other hand, Winwood and the rest of the anti-Spanish party besieged the king with arguments in favour of the voyage, and Winwood, to convince James that the project would be successful, laid before him charts and maps indicating the exact locality of the mine. Raleigh, for his own part, declared that the mine was "at a great distance from the territories of the King of Spain,"* and that the voyage could be carried out without infringement of the supposed Spanish rights. James was swayed this way and that. He allowed Raleigh to continue his preparations, but at the same time he assured the Spanish ambassador that Raleigh went "with the rope about his neck," and swore that if he broke his promise he would send him to Madrid for punishment. Finally, he ruined Raleigh's slender chances of success, and stultified his own assurances, by showing Gondomar a copy of the map given him by Winwood. The map was enough to convince Gondomar that a collision must take place; he promptly informed his Government, who sent a hurried warning to the Spanish settlements in

* To Philip III. "Una mina de oro que no se avia descubierto por nadie, ni era du su Majestad, antes muy distante de tierras suyas."

Guiana and the neighbouring islands. The expedition which sailed from Plymouth in June, 1617, was foredoomed to failure. Raleigh was dogged by ill-luck from the start in what would have been under the most favourable circumstances a hazardous venture ; desertion and death played their part in bringing about the collapse of his fortunes. When the coast of Guiana was sighted, Raleigh lay in his bunk, prostrated by fever. The command of the expedition up the Orinoco was delegated to Keymis, under whom served Raleigh's son Walter and his nephew George. The fiasco which resulted was tragically complete. Keymis, finding to his surprise that a new Spanish settlement had arisen between the mine and the mouth of the river, made the fatal mistake of landing his men and attacking it. The English burnt the town, but its defenders, retiring into the forest, blocked further progress in the direction of the mine, and the expedition was compelled to return. Keymis and his companions pulled slowly down, with the gorgeous tropical foliage of the Orinoco on either hand, and black despair in their hearts, to where their leader awaited them at the river's mouth. The news they brought him could scarcely have been worse. Raleigh's enterprise was wrecked, and he had suffered a further blow in the loss of his son, who had been killed in the attack on the town. Slowly and sadly he returned to England, and in June, 1618, he anchored in Plymouth Sound, whence he had sailed, elated with his new freedom and hopes of success, twelve months before. Gondomar immediately com-

plained to James of Raleigh's conduct in attacking the Spanish settlement ; he demanded that Raleigh should either be punished in England, or sent to Madrid to be hanged for piracy according to the promise made by James before the sailing of the expedition. On June 19 the ambassador laid his complaint before the Council, and on June 21, after a stormy meeting at Greenwich, at which Gondomar was attacked by the anti-Spanish party in the Council, and defended by Buckingham, it was decided to punish Raleigh. On the next day Gondomar expressed himself to James with remarkable freedom. Raleigh and his followers, he said, were in England, and had not been hanged, and the councillors who had advised the king to consent to the expedition were still at large. James, in a passion, flung his hat upon the floor, and burst out into a vehement denunciation of Spanish ideas of justice and the principle of condemnation without trial. Gondomar calmly waited till the king's passion had spent itself in words, and mollified him by ingeniously changing the subject. James, before the conclusion of the audience, had renewed his promise to send Raleigh to Spain. He also acknowledged, either at this interview or on the previous day, that the greatness of the King of Spain was more than that of all the other kings of Christendom put together.* Although James was ready to promise anything, the proposal that Raleigh should be sent to Madrid was too much for the Council ; it

* To Philip III., June 26, 1618. Major Martin Hume, Un gran diplomatico español.

was warmly opposed, and Buckingham, who spoke in its favour, found little support. Philip subsequently settled the matter himself by electing that Raleigh should be dealt with in England.

Gondomar did not remain in England to assist at the final act of the tragedy. On July 15 he left England. His departure was a triumphal procession. Large numbers of recusant priests were released from prison on making a declaration of their willingness to follow the Spanish ambassador oversea,* and over a hundred followed Gondomar to Dover. James told him that no ambassador had ever been so much loved and respected in England, and had a finely gilt parchment drawn up, signed by himself with his great seal, according to which Gondomar and his successors might bring yearly to England six horses, six hawks, and twelve dogs. At the same time licence was granted to him, on behalf of the King of Spain, to export over a hundred pieces of ordnance free of duty.

Raleigh was executed on October 29 upon the old sentence of thirteen years before. His death was hailed by the Spaniards as the expiation of all the injuries done to their empire on the high seas in the past fifty years. Throughout the wretched affair Gondomar's attitude had been perfectly correct. He did his best to prevent the expedition from starting at all ; and as soon as it came to his knowledge that Raleigh was bound for the Orinoco, he protested vigorously to the king. In February,

* State Papers, Domestic.

1617, he appeared before James with a book describing two other voyages made by Raleigh in the Indies, "full of cruelty and plundering, from which he concluded that the third would not be different."* It is ridiculous to imagine that he allowed Raleigh to sail in the hope that he would fall foul of the Spaniards, and that by his discredit and punishment the subservience of England to Spain, and the greatness of the Spanish monarch, would be emphasised. When once the expedition had sailed, it is natural that he should have been eager for its failure, and that he should have heard the stories of deserters with unconcealed pleasure. A loyal Spaniard, convinced of the justice of the Spanish claim to the whole of the territory threatened by Raleigh, could have done nothing else. Even his demand that Raleigh should be hanged at Madrid was, from the Spanish point of view, not wholly unreasonable.

But if his policy was correct and justifiable, there is no doubt that it was totally mistaken. The way in which Gondomar hounded Raleigh to the scaffold, so meritorious in his own eyes,† was the most egregious blunder of his career. His whole attitude has proved his conceptions of policy to have been narrow and superficial, and founded upon assumptions of which he did not take the trouble to prove the accuracy; but it is, above all, his insistence on

* Lionello to Doge, February 10, 1617.

† Narrative of Embassy, 1618. "El ultimo servicio que hice al Estado (y no fue el menor) fue cuando desbarate aquel viaje de Ralegh." Major Martin Hume, Un gran diplomatico español.

Raleigh's execution that proves how far his ideas of statesmanship fell below the general level of his intelligence.

Throughout his long and adventurous life Raleigh had been an intensely unpopular man. His harshness and arrogance had made him equally detested by the Court and by the masses. Only in the studies of philosophers, where passion was laid aside and genius valued as an abstract thing, and in taverns where old seafaring men exchanged memories of the salt winds and the blue waters of the Spanish Main, did Raleigh find appreciation. If he had died on the scaffold at Winchester in 1605, scarcely a voice would have been raised in his favour ; and James must have often regretted the granting of that momentous reprieve. Now all was changed. He died, in the opinion of the man in the street, a martyr to Spain. "The whole town," wrote Harwood the day after the execution, "is full of the worthy end of Sir Walter Raleigh. His Christian and truthful manner made all believe that he was neither guilty of former treasons nor late practices, nor of unjustly injuring the King of Spain." On his journey from Plymouth to London he had issued a pamphlet full of defiance of Spain and her claims to a *mare clausum* across the Atlantic, and his words were eagerly read and quoted. A nobleman who knew Raleigh well said that if the Spanish marriage negotiations were going on, the Spaniards had better have given £100,000 than have him killed ;* and it was even rumoured that

* Pory to Carleton, November 7, 1618.

a Spanish Dominican friar, with keener political insight than the accredited representative of his sovereign, had exerted himself to save Raleigh from the scaffold. The result of his death was to double the animosity with which Spain was regarded in England, and to make the acceptance of the Spanish marriage by the English a more remote possibility than ever.

CHAPTER VI

THE BOHEMIAN CROWN

Revolution in Bohemia—Schemes of the Elector Palatine—James attempts to mediate—Frederick elected King of Bohemia—English anxiety for the Palatinate—Spanish policy—Gondomar ordered to return—Preparations for his arrival.

THE year 1618 was one of ill-omen for the peace of Europe. The Protestants of Bohemia had for a long time objected to the assumed hereditary right by which the elective kingship of Bohemia was vested in a Hapsburg prince, and in 1617 the choice by the Emperor Matthias of his cousin Ferdinand of Styria as sovereign of Bohemia brought matters to a head. Ferdinand, the most devout of Catholics, regarded Protestantism as nothing else than a species of religious anarchy, and before he had ruled for many months revolution broke out in Bohemia. The suppression of the outbreak would have been a serious matter for the Emperor and Ferdinand even if they had not been hampered by interference from outside. Unfortunately, it occurred to the virtuous but inexperienced and reckless young Elector Palatine that the Bohemian revolution would afford him an opportunity of

fishing in troubled waters, and of turning a Protestant crusade to his own worldly profit. He was encouraged by the ever reckless Charles Emanuel of Savoy, and during the autumn and winter of 1618 and the spring of the following year the most insane schemes of conquest were discussed between the Courts of Heidelberg and Turin.

The events in Germany had placed James in a difficult position. It was natural that Spain should give help to the Emperor in suppressing the Bohemian revolution. It was certain that the Elector Frederick intended to make that revolution the excuse for an unjustifiable attack upon his suzerain. This meant that the Elector, James's son-in-law, would probably be involved in a war with Spain, whose friendship James was unwilling to lose. Anxious to escape from his dilemma, James suggested, through Cottington, that a cessation of hostilities should take place in Bohemia, and that the Bohemians should be allowed the free exercise of their religion. This proposal was referred to Gondomar, who was regarded with some reason as an expert on English affairs. He had just drawn up a memoir on the subject of England, in which he pointed out the danger of allowing James to be alienated from Spain. The English nation, he said, was rich; a war with Spain would be received with enthusiasm, and a large grant of money would be forthcoming. He suggested that James's offer of mediation, which he attributed, not altogether correctly, to vanity and nothing else, should be accepted. Anxious to give James no

cause for offence, he wrote to the Pope, entreating him to liberate an Englishman who had been detained in Italy, and declaring that if this were not done, James would ill-treat the English Catholics.*

In 1619 two elections took place which were of considerable importance to Europe. One was the election of Ferdinand to the position of Holy Roman Emperor, rendered vacant by Matthias's death ; the other was the election of Frederick to the throne of Bohemia. It had been clear for a long time that Frederick was aiming at this, and his envoy Dohna had sounded James on the subject. Before definitely accepting the crown, Frederick sent to ask his father-in-law's advice. James had two courses open to him. He might have advised Frederick to abandon his rash adventure ; he might have advised him to accept the crown and the risks involved. This would have been bad advice, and would have been justifiable only if he had intended to support his son-in-law by force of arms. But it would have been wisdom itself compared to what he actually did. Instead of basing his counsel to Frederick on the ground of expediency, he chose to regard the question as a matter of principle, and embarked on a pedantic investigation of Frederick's title to the Bohemian crown at a time when not only the Elector's new kingdom, but his hereditary dominions, lay in imminent danger. Long before the mountains at Whitehall had brought forth their contribution to the sum-total of European wisdom,

* To Paul V., March 2, 1619.

Frederick had accepted the crown. This decision of a foolish young man was destined to plunge Germany into the bloodiest and most desolating war of which history bears record.

James's situation in the year 1619 was by no means as unenviable as it has appeared in the light of after events. He might, indeed, had he possessed a little courage and common sense, have made himself the arbiter of Europe. But he never realised for one moment the possibilities of his position. If he had been able to read Gondomar's memoir of January, 1619, and had obtained some idea of the importance which the late ambassador attached to English neutrality, the scales might have fallen from his eyes. He might have realised that the Spaniards regarded the outbreak of a general European war with the gravest apprehension, and were most unwilling to be involved in hostilities which would cause them expense. If James had only been able to make them believe that he would oppose an invasion of the Palatinate by force of arms, he might have saved his son-in-law's dominions.

By the end of 1619 the Bohemian plan of campaign had completely broken down, and it was clear that Frederick's chances of retaining his new kingdom were of the slenderest. He was, however, determined to fight for his crown and his creed, in spite of the fact that the Princes of the Union, as a body, showed little inclination to bestir themselves in his support. The Calvinist princes were prepared to help him in the defence of the Palatinate, but they declined to go and fight for him in Bohemia.

The Lutheran sovereigns, such as the mediocre but influential John George of Saxony, were unwilling to spend money and lose men for the advancement of a Calvinist ruler, and Frederick's only supporters were hotheads like Christian of Anhalt and freebooters like Mansfeld. With these allies he proposed to defy his suzerain, who had enlisted on his side a powerful supporter in Maximilian of Bavaria, on the condition that Frederick's electorate should be transferred to Maximilian.

This compact between Ferdinand and Maximilian stereotyped the nature of the contest. It was to be a struggle between Frederick, with his armies of swashbucklers, on the one hand, and the Emperor and Maximilian, with their great resources, on the other, for the Palatinate. Possibly Spain would take a hand on the Catholic side. In any case, defeat meant that the Palatinate would pass into the hands of a Catholic ruler. Public feeling in England was deeply stirred. No one who understood the situation could deny that Frederick had only himself to blame. James was indignant at his behaviour, and declared that he must get himself out of his difficulties unaided. But the Electress was an English princess, and it was easy for the bulk of the nation, whose knowledge of politics was limited, to picture Frederick as the champion of Protestantism, fighting an uneven battle against the forces of despotism and Catholic intolerance.

Aliaga was now the most influential man in Spain. Lerma, removed from power, had retired into private life with a cardinal's hat and a vast accumulation

of ill-gotten wealth. Protected by his holy office from further persecution at the hands of the enemies he had not unnaturally made, he passed his declining days in comfort at Valladolid, chanting masses daily in the Cathedral. Howell saw the following lines inscribed beneath a picture of him in Madrid :

> "Sobre las ombres d'este Atlante
> Yazen en aquestos dias
> Estas tres monarquias."

The administration had passed into more capable hands. Aliaga had been the king's confessor, but, unlike many ecclesiastics, he was able to put his country before his Church. He was most unwilling to intervene in the Bohemian quarrel, and anxious above all things to keep James quiet. As early as the summer of 1619 it was arranged that Gondomar, as the fittest man for the task, should return to England. It was thought that James's confidence in Gondomar would free his mind from all suspicion of Spanish intentions in Germany, and that, in the event of Frederick losing the Palatinate, it would be possible to make James believe that a clause in the marriage treaty would provide for its restitution.

Throughout 1619 Lafuente was constantly writing and urging Gondomar to return, as the postponement of his journey was arousing James's suspicions. He thought that Gondomar might come to England in the spring in order to condole with James on the death of the queen, and in a quaint letter assured him that he "need not trouble himself about the

tears that have to be dried, for that was done long ago," and begged him to appear in gay colours, as the king detested mourning. Gondomar was by no means anxious to return. He took a pessimistic view of the situation, and believed that since his departure James had abandoned the idea of the Spanish marriage. His apprehensions were founded upon nothing more serious than one of James's passing moods. James's policy now and then oscillated away from the Spanish alliance in the direction of the European Protestants, but it invariably oscillated back again. Gondomar's influence had, as he anticipated, lingered at Whitehall. But in the autumn of 1619 he declared that everything had been "altered and spoilt" since he left. James was, he said, in league with the Dutch, was encouraging the Elector Palatine in his claims on Bohemia, and had given up the idea of the marriage.* It had been suggested that Gondomar should go to France and Germany first, and he pleaded that he might be allowed to carry out his original instructions. "The affair of the marriage of the Infanta Maria with the Prince of Wales," he wrote, "is in no hurry, nor is it advisable to hasten it on, but rather to . . . take advantage of the opportunities which naturally and with good appearance may delay it."† He meant, of course, that the longer the negotiations could be spun out, the easier it would be to put pressure on James. Undoubtedly, at this time, he was anxious that the

* To Ciriza, November, 1619.

† To Philip III., September 15, 1619.

marriage should ultimately become an accomplished fact. But he intended to exact from James the uttermost farthing in the shape of religious concessions.* He did not foresee that within a very few years the people of England would have gained so much ground in the constitutional struggle that the marriage could not possibly be concluded upon the terms he hoped to obtain.

At last he consented to go to England, passing through France and Flanders, to the Courts of which countries he was accredited as Extraordinary Ambassador. He complained bitterly of the treatment meted out to him after so many years of faithful and scantily rewarded service. He wrote in December: "Obedience will make me shut my eyes, but I am very doubtful whether I shall fulfil my duty, as I go to mar and to injure matters, and so the best thing that could happen to me would be to end my life before arriving in England." Before sailing, he penned from Valladolid a final protest, complaining of his ill-health, and praying to be excused from going to England.

In that country great preparations were being made for his arrival. The Bishop of Ely's house was got ready for the reception of the great Spaniard, and the prospect of mass being publicly said in a bishop's chapel aroused the greatest indignation.† The English people were at a loss to see how James could be at the same time the friend of the Elector Palatine and of the King of Spain. "No one

* To Philip III., April 20, 1620.

† Chamberlain to Carleton, October 30, 1619.

knows," Hall wrote, "how two buckets can go down into the well at once." James deliberately shut his ears to the popular clamour. He returned vague answers to Dohna's appeals for assistance, and was indignant with anyone who expressed a strong opinion in favour of helping Frederick. As the time of Gondomar's arrival approached, he refused to commit himself to any action or statement which he feared would meet with the ambassador's disapproval. He even for the time refused to second Frederick's request to the City of London for a loan of £100,000, though he afterwards gave his consent. He would do nothing till he could obtain Gondomar's advice.*

* Spinola to Gondomar, March 17, 1620. "De todas partes se ha entendido que el Rey de la gran Bretanna aguardara a V. S. con estraordinario deseo, y tenia suspensas de las cosas hasta la llegada de V. S."

CHAPTER VII

GONDOMAR'S SECOND EMBASSY

Fall of the Howards—Gondomar's reception at Whitehall—The real English policy—James refuses to help the Princes of the Union—Gondomar revives old grievances—Execution of Barneveld—Invasion of the Palatinate—James quarrels with Parliament—Gondomar's unpopularity.

On March 5, after a very rough passage, the ambassador landed at Dover. The town of Dover, it is recorded, could not give him a banquet, nor was he received with a salute, because the small vessel in which he came had no ordnance, and was unable to fire one in return. To make amends for the omission, nine pieces were fired at his departure for London. Sir Henry Mainwaring, the Lieutenant of the Castle, who had been an adventurous seaman in his younger days, went to meet the ambassador on the beach. Gondomar received him with the jesting offer to excuse him twelve crowns out of the million he owed the Spaniards, if he would pay the rest—an allusion to the Lieutenant's past exploits on the high seas.*

Gondomar found many changes among the men

* Mainwaring to Lord Zouch, March 6, 1620.

who surrounded James. During his absence from England, the Howards and their dependents had fallen from favour before the rising star of Buckingham. Nottingham, the Lord High Admiral, Suffolk, the Lord High Treasurer, Wallingford, the Master of the Wards, and Lake, the Secretary of State, were all compelled or induced to resign their offices; while Suffolk and Lake were prosecuted, without very serious results in either case. The fall of the Howards was welcomed by all who hated Spain and Catholicism. They were, on the whole, a venal and worthless crew. Wallingford was a conspicuous exception, and Suffolk, a careless, easy-going man, was dragged down by his greedy and scheming wife. Still, their influence as a party was unhealthy in the extreme. The glorious traditions of the Howard family were now enshrined in the person of Belted Will, the lord of Naworth, who watched nightly from his turret for the reddening of the northern sky which announced a raid from across the Border. These men had all been intimates and pensioners of the Spanish ambassador. Their places were filled by men who disliked Spain, and sympathised with the Elector Palatine. Fortunately for the ambassador, Buckingham proved as warm a supporter of the Spanish marriage as his fallen rivals had been.

Gondomar's reception by James was heralded by an alarming incident. As he was passing along a corridor to the audience-chamber with the Earl of Arundel, attended by a number of followers, the beams on which the corridor rested gave way, and

the whole structure collapsed. Gondomar and Arundel saved themselves by clinging to a door, but their servants fell about fifteen feet into the yard below, fortunately without sustaining any serious injury. It was hinted that the beams had been sawn through by the Puritans in order to murder Gondomar, but the ambassador was convinced that the affair was nothing but an accident. The suggestion that it was an omen of evil to come was naturally by no means pleasing to James.*

Gondomar was determined to let James see that he was far from satisfied with his conduct. The king received him warmly, observing that he was very like a great friend of his, called the Count of Gondomar. The ambassador replied that he was glad to see what a resemblance James bore to the King of Great Britain whom he had formerly known, and entreated him to tell him if he were the same person. Next day, after a preliminary conversation with Digby, in which he haughtily declared that there was no excuse for what had been done in England since he left, Gondomar had a private audience of the king.

James opened the conversation by saying that he had heard from Buckingham that Gondomar, in shaking hands with him, had squeezed his sore finger and hurt him very much. He remembered that Lord Montague had once done the same to Lord Burleigh when he had the gout. Gondomar

* To Philip III., March 26; Chamberlain to Carleton, March 20, 1620.

must bear this in mind and not hurt him, but pity the state of affliction and trouble in which he found him ; for if Winwood had died after Gondomar's departure, three hundred Winwoods were still left. He swore, however, that he had no intention of marrying his son to anyone but the Spanish Infanta, nor did he wish to be friends with anyone but the Spanish nation. "He ended his speech," wrote Gondomar, "with so much earnestness that he took off his hat and wiped the perspiration from his brow." Gondomar did not wish to press James too hard, so he told him that he respected every word he said, but that words by themselves had little strength.

In the long letter in which Gondomar described their two interviews,* he referred to the increasing power of the Puritans and enemies of Spain, and the hostility of Teronimo Lando, the Venetian ambassador, who had shown his ill-feeling by not visiting Gondomar. This complaint hardly came well from Gondomar, after his own rudeness, on his previous embassy, to Foscarini and Barbarigo. He also gave some details with reference to James's private life and amusements.

James's attitude with regard to the Palatinate showed his total inability to grasp the situation. He approached the question from the point of view of a suppliant asking for lenient terms. That he held the trump card, in the shape of the threat of English intervention, never occurred to him. Gondomar saw the mistake James had made, and

* To Philip III., March 26, 1620.

adopted a lofty tone which was strangely out of keeping with the timorous policy of his master. Rarely has a stranger diplomatic farce been played. On the one side were the people of England, eager for war, contemptuous of Spanish friendship ; on the other side was Spain, loathing the idea of an expensive war, prevaricating when appealed to for help by the Emperor, anxious above all things to keep England neutral. If James had not made it clear that he would not draw the sword on behalf of his son-in-law, it is almost certain that the Spaniards would never have invaded the Palatinate. If Henry VIII. or Elizabeth had been in James's place England might have been dictating to Spain. As it was, James was as helpless as a child. He timidly asked the ambassador if he thought that the Emperor intended to attack the Palatinate, to which Gondomar replied by inquiring what James would do if London were taken from him. The envoy of the Princes of the Union, Buwinckhausen, watched James's sorry performance with anger and disgust. One audience with Gondomar determined James to send no assistance to the princes, to whom he wrote vaguely of a general pacification. The princes had neither affection nor sympathy for Frederick, but they knew that the loss of the Palatinate would mean the ruin of Protestantism in Germany, and they were determined to oppose its transference to Maximilian of Bavaria tooth and nail. They were naturally indignant at James's meanness and folly, and before the end of March their envoy had left his Court. James had

told him that he might levy volunteers in England, but when Buwinckhausen demanded a straightforward answer to the vital question, "Would the King of England help the princes if the Emperor demanded the dissolution of their Union?" he gave the characteristic and exasperating reply that he would help them if the demand for the dissolution of their Union were not legal. Who was to pronounce on the legality of the demand James did not suggest. Buwinckhausen's patience was exhausted, and he left England at once.

Gondomar, in the meantime, was luring James still further into the morass by a judicious assumption of hauteur. When he had been in England about two months, James sent to his house the two Secretaries of State, Calvert and Naunton, to promise better treatment for the Catholics, and soon after this Buckingham and Digby went to see Gondomar, who treated them to some very plain speaking. He had certainly some ground for complaint. He indicated the enrolment of volunteers for the Palatinate which was being carried out by James's permission, and the contribution which was being levied throughout England. He declared that James was intriguing against the Emperor and ill-treating the Catholics, and revived the old commercial grievances, asserting that the piracy indulged in by English seamen was now even worse than it had been before. James, he said, was trying to combine the advantages of peace and war. A convincing defence of their master's German policy was more than the Englishmen could be expected to give. Digby, however, joined issue

with Gondomar on the question of the Catholics. He expressed his surprise that Gondomar should be so dissatisfied with their treatment, telling him that Archbishop Abbot had declared to the king that the existing conditions practically amounted to religious liberty. Gondomar brought the conference to an amicable conclusion by telling a story about a friend of his on the Council of Works at Valladolid, and Buckingham and Digby took their leave. They repeated the conversation to the king, who was, as Gondomar learnt with satisfaction, much alarmed at his menacing language.*

James, on his side, had been pressing Gondomar for a specific declaration as to the conditions on which Philip was willing to give the Infanta in marriage to the prince. Gondomar was naturally not anxious to disclose the exorbitant character of the real Spanish terms at so critical a period. Accordingly he replied in kind to the equivocations of James.

While James was swearing undying friendship to the King of Spain, the strongest possible pressure was being put upon him to break with Spain altogether. The Princes of the Union had renewed their demands, and the Dutch were insisting that without James's help they could do nothing for the Elector. James's feelings towards the Dutch, always lukewarm, had become colder still since the orgy of revolution and religious intolerance in which they had indulged in the two previous years. The toleration by Barneveld's Government of Arminian

* To Philip III., May 22, 1620.

doctrines had roused the Calvinists to fury. They had organised a revolution, thrown all the Arminians into prison, and summoned a synod to meet at Dort. Maurice, who knew nothing of theology, and cared less, acquiesced in the proceedings of his subjects, and himself wrote to James asking him to send four English theologians to the Synod.* But his acquiescence went too far when he permitted the Calvinists to wreak their vengeance upon Barneveld. The aged statesman was brought to trial, nominally for treason, but really for a tolerance which appeared a crime to the fanatics of Dort. On May 13, 1619, the cobble-stones of the Binnenhof at the Hague were stained with his blood. These events had disgusted James, as they had disgusted every friend of justice and tolerance. He now received the Dutch appeal with the observation that they wanted to entangle him, and declined to do more than allow the enlistment of English volunteers. His policy of inaction was supported by Buckingham, who was now a warm friend of Gondomar, and even discussed with him the outrageous scheme for the partition of the Netherlands, which is in itself an admirable comment on the quality of James's and Buckingham's statesmanship.

Gondomar saw that his primary object was achieved, and that it was no longer necessary to pretend that Spinola was not going to invade the Palatinate. The fiction that Spinola would march straight for Bohemia and leave the Palatinate in

* Ulloa to Philip III., September 7, 1618.

peace was regularly produced when James was more than usually embarrassed by appeals on behalf of his son-in-law, but it was a fiction in which no reasonable person could any longer place the slightest credence. The recruiting went on busily, but the forces raised were small ; and when, in the summer, Sir Horace Vere sailed for the Low countries with 2,000 men, Gondomar sarcastically complimented him on his courage in proposing to engage 10,000 men with one-fifth of that number.* The details of the negotiations which had been conducted at Madrid in the previous winter, when the imperial ambassador Khevenhüller had frightened Philip into a promise of assistance by threats of war between Spain and the Emperor in this world and eternal torment in the next,† were as yet unknown in England. But not even James himself can have felt any genuine surprise when, at the end of August, 1620, the blow fell, and Spinola entered the Palatinate.

The news, though hardly unexpected, caused the greater consternation. James alone deliberately shut his eyes to what was passing in Germany. He spent long days out hunting, endeavoured to keep the discussion of State affairs in the background, and paid little attention to the remonstrances of Dohna. Gondomar, in the meantime, dared to proclaim in public his delight at the turn events had taken, saying that his master would now be able to gratify the King of England by restoring

* Chamberlain to Carleton, July 8, 1620.

† Quoted from Khevenhüller by Professor Gardiner.

the Palatinate to Frederick.* James's conscience now and then pricked him into a desire to break his fetters; but these pangs were fleeting, and led at the most to futile exhibitions of temper. At the end of September Gondomar had to listen to an abusive harangue which must have reminded him of the old struggles of 1614, when he and Boischot had listened daily to James's denunciations of Spain. James now roundly accused Gondomar of deceiving him with regard to Spinola's projected invasion of the Palatinate. The accusation was in itself nothing more than a confession of James's own credulity. Gondomar replied with dignity, denying the charge brought against him. In a few days James had retracted his words and grovelled before the ambassador; while in November his infatuation had reached such a pitch that he spoilt several pictures in the Whitehall gallery by having pieces which reflected on the Spaniards cut out of the canvas.† Late in the autumn, the news of Frederick's defeat at Prague reached London. James thought that peace might still be made in Germany on conditions which would save the Palatinate and the Princes of the Union, if only Frederick would renounce his claims on the Bohemian crown, and Digby was sent to Vienna early in 1621 with the object of obtaining terms for Frederick on this basis. Two obstacles, however, stood in the way of a settlement—the compact by which Frederick's Electorate was to be transferred to Maximilian,

* Chamberlain to Carleton, September 16, 1620.

† Locke to Carleton, November 11, 1620.

and the character of Frederick himself. The Elector, rather than abandon his royal dignity, was ready to stake his own dominions on a last throw, and deluge Germany once more with armies of free-booters. The Imperial ban had been pronounced against him in January, while three months later the Union was dissolved.

When Digby, his object unachieved, returned to England, he endeavoured to stir James into action, and induced him to write to the Emperor and the King of Spain on behalf of the Palatinate. But James would go no farther. He could not realise that the Palatinate might really be lost. His unlimited confidence in Gondomar and in his master's friendship made him perfectly certain that Spain would ultimately see that the Palatinate was restored to Frederick, and that a clause to this effect would be inserted in the marriage treaty. This extraordinary delusion, so maddening to his more sensible advisers and so convenient for Gondomar, led him to throw away the best chance he had ever had of playing a dignified part in Europe and helping his son-in-law. This chance was given him by the Parliament of 1621. The men of this Parliament, though ignorant of the real nature of Frederick's quarrel with his suzerain, saw the great issue at stake as James was never able to see it. They were ready to give the king a grant of money in order to withstand the triumphant forces of Catholicism in Germany; but they would not give it till they were sure that James would put the money to the use which they intended. James was completely

under Gondomar's thumb; and the ambassador encouraged him to resist, speaking loftily of the "seditious" language of the Commons. James put himself hopelessly in the wrong by attempting to lay down the maxim that there were certain topics—one being the Spanish marriage—which the Commons might not discuss. The Commons appealed to their right of free speech in a Protestation which has become famous, and a dissolution followed. The dissolution, wrote Gondomar, was "the key wherewith to open and do everything good that may be expected here for the service of God and your Majesty." He went on to pay a tribute to the services which Buckingham had rendered in helping him to induce James to break with Parliament.*

Thus it was that the year 1621 ended in the complete triumph of Gondomar. His relations with the king were totally unlike those of an ambassador with the sovereign to whom he is accredited. He was practically the dictator of James's policy, and the chosen companion of his leisure hours. On the day of the Epiphany, before attending the Court masque, Gondomar and the Marchioness of Buckingham dined alone with the king by the fireside in the royal chamber. James was in deshabille, with a nightcap on; and after Lady Buckingham's departure he dressed himself for the masque in Gondomar's presence.†

Gondomar's popularity, however, was confined

* To Philip IV., January 31, 1622.

† To Philip IV., January 31, 1622.

to the inner circles of Whitehall. By the mass of the courtiers he was regarded with fear and suspicion ; and by the populace he was more detested than any foreign ambassador who had ever been in England. Scarcely had he arrived in London, when the recruiting drums were ostentatiously beaten outside his windows. As he passed through the streets he was met with scowling faces and often with insulting words. "There goes the devil in a dungcart !" a fellow cried one day as Gondomar passed by in his litter ; and the populace saved the inventor of the phrase from punishment. On another occasion a man rushed up to the litter and shouted, "Death to the Spaniards !" into the ear of the ambassador inside. Towards the end of 1620, Gondomar received word that a plot to murder him was on foot. He sat up all night to guard against an attack, and even went to the length of receiving the Sacrament. Next day he asked the king to give him a strong bodyguard for his protection, a request which was complied with. Nor was the hatred of Gondomar limited to the masses. Many educated men were led by their disgust with James's policy, and with the idea of the Spanish marriage, into the strongest expressions of feeling against Spain and her ambassador. The public feeling was inflamed by a pamphlet, written by Thomas Scott, and entitled "Vox Populi, or news from Spain, which may serve to forewarn both England and the United Provinces how far to trust

to Spanish pretences," the contents being an imaginary conversation on the state of England between Gondomar and the Spanish ministers. The ambassador paid little attention to these productions, of which, he said, he could send a cartload to Madrid every day if there were a daily carrier. He himself described a cartoon in which James was depicted lying on a bed, with Buckingham kneeling by his side and scratching the king's head with his right hand, while with the left he signed to the members of the Council to stand apart and not to hear what Gondomar, who was sitting next to the king, was saying to him.*

Men found themselves arrested, and often imprisoned, on the charge of speaking abusively against Spain. A man named Richard Lydell was declared by an informer to have said that the Spanish ambassador would never die till he was hanged, and called him the Devil.† In the spring of 1621 one Ward, a preacher of Ipswich, was imprisoned for painting pictures of the Spanish Armada and Gunpowder Plot, and Dr. Everard, reader at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, for preaching against the Spanish match and the cruelties of the Spaniards. In the summer the prevaricator of Cambridge was expelled from the University for saying that in a banquet to which he invited his companions he would have all sorts of instruments

* To Ciriza, December 11, 1620.

† Information of James Wilson, of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

except Gondomar's pipe. Sir Robert Bendloss was prosecuted on a charge of misdemeanour, one of the accusations brought against him being that he thought the king mad to allow the Spanish ambassador to export ordnance, a permission which also received some criticism in the House of Commons. Early in 1622 a certain Dr. Winniffe was sent to prison for comparing the Palatinate to a soul in hell, and Spinola to the devil. Terrified at the prospect of further punishment, the unfortunate divine wrote in abject terms to Gondomar and the emperor's ambassador Schwarzenberg, who procured his release.*

James could not have pleaded, as an excuse for his credulity with regard to the intention of Spain, that he was not warned. In the previous summer his ambassador in Paris wrote home, saying that the Spaniards were making game of him, and that the French ambassador in Madrid had reported to his Government that the Infanta Maria was to marry a son of the Emperor. He would, however, listen neither to the ambassador in France, nor to anybody at Court, except Buckingham and Gondomar. There was no subject, however delicate, on which he did not allow himself to be guided by Gondomar, and he even asked his advice on matters which it was obviously the height of indiscretion to discuss with a foreign ambassador. For example, in the summer of 1621, Parliament, fearing Catholic heirs from the Spanish

* Locke to Carleton, April, 1622.

marriage, begged James to declare his daughter, the Electress, and her children heirs to the English throne after Prince Charles. Of all possible people, James consulted Gondomar. The ambassador replied vaguely with an illustration from Spanish history, hinting that James should leave things as they were.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIASCO

Digby sent to Madrid to conclude marriage treaty—Coloma succeeds Gondomar—Gondomar leaves England—Olivares—Arrival of Prince Charles and Buckingham at Madrid—Policy of Philip IV. and Olivares—Gondomar tries to avert a breach—Departure of Prince Charles—Gondomar's responsibility—He refuses to return to England—Death of Gondomar and James I.

In February, 1622, Digby was despatched to Spain with full powers to conclude the marriage treaty. Gondomar wrote home begging that Digby should be treated with the greatest courtesy, and asking at the same time that leave of absence should be given to himself and Don Carlos Coloma sent to England to replace him.* The Spanish Government agreed that it was advisable to have Gondomar in Madrid to deal with Digby, and it was decided that he should leave England in the summer. Coloma arrived in England on May 8. Gondomar, in order to make his arrival as impressive as possible, arranged that one of the king's galleons should meet him at Calais, and take him to Dover. The new ambassador was well received on landing, and Gondomar himself joined him at Gravesend, travelled to London with

* To Ciriza, January 31, 1622.

him, and accompanied him to his first audience.* James received Coloma with great friendliness, and showed his affection for Spain by sitting at a masque with Gondomar on one side of him and Coloma on the other. Gondomar, before he left England, drew up an account of the pensions paid to the "confidents," while he also gave Coloma the key to the cipher containing the real names.

He gained one point before he sailed which seemed to him of inestimable value. He obtained from Prince Charles a secret promise that if, on Gondomar's arrival in Spain, he should advise the prince to go to Spain he would travel to Madrid incognito.† Thus was the ground prepared for the imbecile enterprise of the following spring, and the sorry diplomatic farce to which it led. James entertained Gondomar at a farewell dinner at Greenwich, the prince, Buckingham, and Lady Buckingham being the only other guests. James showed genuine distress at the departure of his friend and mentor. He made Gondomar promise to return to England, and gave him a diamond which he wore on his finger, Prince Charles doing the same. Gondomar left London with every token of respect. The Duchess of Lennox accompanied him in his litter for more than a league out of London, and over fifty carriages, filled with ladies and gentlemen of the Court, followed him along the road to Plymouth.‡ At Plymouth he was taken ill, and was obliged to rest for a short time before he sailed.

* To Philip IV., May 16, 1622.

† *Ibid.*, May 31, 1622.

‡ *Ibid.*, Plymouth, June 8, 1622.

Despite his promises, he was never to set foot on English soil again. For within two years of his sailing from Plymouth Sound the scales had fallen from the eyes of the English king, and the great diplomatic edifice which Gondomar had toiled so long to construct had fallen to pieces like a house of cards.

Gondomar's departure from England was the beginning of the end of his political career. His influence in Madrid was in no way commensurate with his influence at Whitehall. Philip III. had died in 1621, and the boy who succeeded him placed the administration in the hands of Guzman de Olivares. Olivares was an abler man than Gondomar, and in more fortunate times and in any other country he might have been a really successful statesman. He suffered, however, from the particular form of political blindness which afflicted Gondomar and most of his countrymen. Velasquez has painted him—a big, swarthy man, with dark eyes and bushy beard and power in every line of his face.

Soon after Gondomar's return to Spain he penned a letter to James, declaring his master's anxiety for the marriage, and his own gratitude for James's kindness to him. "That a Spaniard," he wrote, "has been and should be councillor, not only of your Council of State, but also of the Privy Council, that surpasses not only all the deserts, but also all the services that I have been able to render. . . . I will discover to you the great desire of the king, my master, not only for the conclusion of this

business, but also that it should be concluded with all brevity.*

This declaration, and a similar assurance in a letter to Buckingham,† doubtless had some effect in inducing the Prince and his friend to carry out the wild scheme of visiting Madrid which was hatched in the ensuing winter. The plan suggested was that Charles and Buckingham should travel to Madrid incognito, should, with the help of Digby, now Earl of Bristol, conclude the negotiations on the spot, obtaining a guarantee of restoration for the Elector Palatine, whose dominions were now irretrievably lost, and bring the Infanta home in triumph. James was horrified when they broached the scheme to him ; the dangers and difficulties of the plan were only too clear, and he endeavoured, by tears and entreaties, to dissuade them. He soon gave way, however, and determined to make the best of the situation by shutting his eyes as far as he could to the risk of the undertaking, and persuading himself that his "sweet boys and dear venturous knights, worthy to be put in a new romanso," were departing on a noble and chivalrous enterprise, and not, as was really the case, on a preposterous errand which could not possibly do any good and might result in the gravest complications.

On the evening of March 7, 1623, Baby Charles and Steenie rode into Madrid, and presented themselves before the amazed and horrified Bristol. The

* To James I., September 19, 1622. Goodman, "Court of King James I."

† September 10, 1622. Goodman, "Court of King James I."

ambassador saw that reproaches were useless, and that the best possible colour must be put upon the foolhardy adventure. The arrival of the prince was less surprising to Gondomar, who learnt the same evening that his hopes were realised.* He hastened at once to Olivares, whom he found at supper. "What brings you here at such an hour as this?" asked the minister. "You look as jolly as if you had the King of England himself in Madrid." "If we have not the king," replied Gondomar, "we have the next best thing to him—the Prince of Wales."† Olivares carried the news to the king, who summoned a meeting of councillors at eight o'clock the next morning. Gondomar, who was already a member of the Council of War, was raised to the Council of State, presumably because his knowledge of the prince and of England made his presence at the deliberations a necessity. Later in the morning he hurried to "the house with the seven chimneys," where Bristol lived, and told the prince that he brought strange news, for, he said, an Englishman had just been sworn a Privy Councillor of Spain.‡

* According to Charles and Buckingham (to James I.—Nichols, "Progresses") they did not send for Gondomar till next morning; but, according to "Fragmentos Historicos de la Vida de Gaspar de Guzman," manuscript in the possession of Major Martin Hume, and quoted by him in his "Court of Philip IV.," Gondomar was summoned to Bristol's house the same evening. He probably heard of their arrival from a more private source. Nichols, in his "Progresses," says: "That night they were hardly known by any."

† Major Martin Hume, "Court of Philip IV.," from "Fragmentos Historicos," etc.

‡ Howell, "Familiar Letters." To Sir T. Savage, March 27, 1623.

The rest of the day was spent by Gondomar in arranging for an elaborately accidental meeting between Olivares and Buckingham, which took place that evening in the gardens by the Manzanares, and was followed by the introduction of Buckingham to the king. It was arranged that Charles, still incognito, should see the Infanta, with whom he was already beginning to imagine himself in love, on the Sunday, March 9. That afternoon Gondomar went to Bristol's house, and he, Charles, Buckingham, Aston, and Bristol entered the ambassador's coach, and drove to the Prado, where the coaches of the royal family were to meet them.

Foolhardy as the action of Charles in placing himself as a hostage in the hands of the Spaniards may have been, there is no doubt that Philip IV. and Olivares were considerably embarrassed by his arrival. Philip was strongly opposed to the marriage, while the Infanta herself regarded it with absolute horror. Olivares saw that the prince must be induced to leave Madrid without his bride and without the restoration of the Palatinate, and, if possible, without a breach. He must be received with the greatest cordiality and gorgeous entertainments arranged in his honour, while, in private, every pretext for delaying the marriage must be brought forward. Olivares hoped for an unfavourable decision from the Pope, upon whom he would then be able to throw the entire responsibility for the collapse of the negotiations. If the Pope gave his consent, Charles must be pressed hard with new

conditions, and forced into breaking off the negotiations himself.

The Infanta Maria was a girl of sixteen, simple-minded, ignorant, and devout. She passed much time daily in listening to the ghostly counsel of her confessor, who frequently assured her that her future husband would inevitably go to hell. In consequence, she looked upon the heretic prince whom she had never seen as a monster of iniquity, and vowed that she would go into a nunnery rather than become his wife. In personal appearance she was, like Philip, of a northern rather than a Spanish type, with fair hair and a pink and white complexion.

Soon after four o'clock on this Sunday afternoon the royal carriages passed the spot where Charles was peering eagerly from the window of Bristol's coach for a glimpse of his future wife. The poor little Infanta, in order that he might recognise her, had a blue ribbon tied round her arm ; and when she caught sight of the prince, and saw his eyes fixed upon her, she blushed crimson, which was interpreted by the enthusiastic onlookers as a sign that she was favourably impressed by his appearance.* Charles, for his part, fell in love with her on the spot.

The ostentatious welcome given to the prince completely deceived both the visitors themselves and the people of Madrid, who imagined that Charles was about to be converted, and composed

* Howell, "Familiar Letters." To Sir T. Savage, March 27, 1623.

songs and verses in his honour. Howell quotes the following stanza by Lope de Verga :

> "Carlos Estuardo soy,
> Que, siendo amor mi guia,
> Al cielo d'España voy,
> Por ver mi estrella Maria."

Olivares, however, now saw the full extent of the self-deception by which his predecessors had been, and Charles and Buckingham still were, deluded. He threw the blame upon Gondomar. He perceived that Gondomar had allowed the prince to come to Madrid under the impression that Philip would give him the Infanta on condition of liberty of worship in England, supplemented by the promise of future concessions without any guarantees, and that the Spaniards would get the Palatinate restored to Frederick. In other words, James and Charles had been led to believe that Olivares and his master would, entirely as a favour to the King of England, make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of every diplomatist in Europe by pressing on the Emperor an unreasonable demand which he could not possibly accept. Olivares perfectly understood the value of the marriage negotiations as a means of keeping James quiet, but he saw that Gondomar, by inducing Charles to come to Madrid, had precipitated a crisis. At the same time, the ambassador had allowed the Spanish Government to believe that James would accept conditions which would almost drive his subjects to rebellion. Certainly James and Charles showed

themselves ready to promise anything, but Olivares did not trust them, and as the long summer months passed, and Charles lingered in Madrid, the minister's dissatisfaction with Gondomar steadily increased.

Gondomar was not allowed to play more than a subordinate part in the long and tedious negotiations, of which Olivares kept the threads in his own hands. He felt, however, that on their issue hung his own reputation as a diplomatist, and he laboured privately to prevent a breach. Charles himself had made a favourable impression upon all who were not obliged to discuss State affairs with him, and to whom the stupidity and double-dealing, which to the end of his life remained his chief diplomatic assets, were not apparent. Buckingham, however, did not please the Spaniards—not so much, it would seem, from his arrogance towards themselves as from the rude manner in which he treated the prince—while the courtiers who had been sent from England made themselves very unpopular. They had nothing in common with the grave Spanish Dons who endeavoured to entertain them; they spent their time in playing cards and grumbling at the dullness of Madrid, and the outrageous impudence of Archy, the English Court jester, stretched the patience of his hosts wellnigh to breaking-point.

Gondomar professed to treat the matter lightly. When the queen asked whether London was more populous than Madrid, he jestingly replied that only women were left there now, for all the men were

booted and spurred to come to Spain.* He endeavoured, at the same time, to smooth over the discord between the Englishmen and Spaniards. All his tact was needed to prevent an open quarrel when Sir Edmund Verney assaulted a priest, while the pains which he took to liberate some Englishmen from the dungeons of the Inquisition compelled the surprise and admiration of Howell, who comments on his kindness to Englishmen in Spain, "notwithstanding the base affronts he hath often received from the London boys, as he calls them."

Nothing but Charles's love for the Infanta, in which vanity played a considerable part, kept him in Madrid till August. Buckingham had realised for some time that Olivares was trifling with them. The Pope having given his consent to the marriage, Olivares produced an entirely fresh set of impossible conditions, and when the amorous Charles disgraced himself and his doting father by consenting to these, the Spaniards declined to send the Infanta to England till the following spring. Buckingham was not the man to endure such treatment patiently. He quarrelled with Olivares, and persuaded the prince to leave Madrid. Charles and Philip took an affectionate farewell of one another. But Charles's vanity had been wounded, and he was now determined that nothing would induce him to marry the Infanta. Gondomar, deeply grieved at the collapse of the scheme which he now foresaw,

* Howell, "Familiar Letters." To Sir John North, August 15, 1623.

accompanied the prince to the sea-coast, whence he returned to Madrid to make a last effort to keep the negotiations alive. Bristol, at the same time, was endeavouring to atone for some of the fatal errors which James, his Baby, and Steenie had made, and to prevent the honour and dignity of his king and prince from being compromised beyond hope of redemption.

Curiously enough, the only person at the Spanish Court who was not glad to see the last of Charles was the poor girl who had been for six months the centre of this tangled web of shady intrigue. Maria had not been told that the negotiations were a sham. She had been poring over an English grammar, and endeavouring to regard the history and customs of her future subjects from a wider point of view than that of the Spanish cloister. She had become reconciled, under the tutelage of a more judicious confessor, to the prospect of marrying Charles; while her acquaintance with him, formal as it had been, had quite dispelled the antipathy with which she had at first regarded him. She wept at his departure, and ordered masses to be said daily for his soul.

Gondomar watched with bitter disappointment the fading of his gorgeous dream. He saw that the prince's visit had destroyed for ever the chances of the marriage. Yet he himself had done more than any living man to induce Charles to come to Spain, and on him must fall a large share of the blame which attaches to the enterprise. James and Charles made a scapegoat of Bristol, with whom

the Spaniards deeply sympathised;* while the courtiers of Madrid threw the blame on Buckingham. Olivares, while perceiving the error of judgment which Gondomar had made, was willing, now that the English negotiations were off, and he was no longer likely to compromise his master on this particular point, to make use of his brilliant diplomatic gifts and his knowledge of English affairs. In the summer of 1624 it was rumoured in England that the dreaded ambassador was returning. But Gondomar was determined that Whitehall should see him no more; ill-health and disappointment were fast doing their work. In the autumn Philip appointed him ambassador in England. Gondomar begged to be excused, whereupon Olivares ordered him in peremptory terms to start for England at once. Gondomar wrote to Don Fernando Giron, begging him to use his influence with Olivares on his behalf, and to get someone else appointed. Olivares was furious, and for some time he and Gondomar were not on speaking terms.† Philip, in order to make the appointment more palatable, changed the title to that of Extraordinary Ambassador, but Gondomar still pleaded his inability to carry out the task, and the king yielded. Gondomar, after a last journey to the Netherlands, where he discussed the German question with the Infanta Isabella and Spinola, retired to his native province,

* Howell, "Familiar Letters." To Lord Clifford, August 26, 1623.

† Aston to Buckingham, December 24, 1624. Goodman, "Court of King James I."

of which he was appointed governor and captain-general. He would willingly have accepted a post at Madrid, but Olivares preferred to have as colleagues in the administration men of comparatively small ability, whom he could influence and overrule. He feared Gondomar's strong personality and knowledge of men, and distrusted him as the advocate of the English marriage. Excluded from politics, in failing health and in want of money, Gondomar spent the last months of his life in the province of Galicia. At intervals he visited Madrid, and there, early in the morning of October 2, 1626, he died.

His friend and dupe, James I. of England, had gone to his grave eighteen months earlier, with all his high hopes unrealised. It could hardly have been otherwise with a man who let his opportunities pass him one by one as he wandered chasing shadows in a sort of diplomatic cloud-cuckoo-land. The best, and, except Charles II., the acutest of the royal house which by its theory and practice of kingship did so much to foster the growth of English democratic sentiment, he was, nevertheless, a total failure as a statesman. The warm, impulsive and sympathetic heart which so largely redeemed him as a man was of no profit to him as a king; an instrument by which he might have won the affections of his subjects served only to blind him to the weaknesses of the pleasant but incompetent advisers with whom he surrounded himself. A man who could slight Bacon and confide in Robert Carr must have been totally unable to form an adequate judgment of men.

To attain the most exalted and elusive ideals he habitually employed the most dishonourable means; mistaking cheap cunning for brilliant diplomacy, he endeavoured to trip up and outwit the acutest politicians in Europe. The result was that he never tripped up anybody but himself, and that foreign statesmen and his own subjects alike ceased to trust or believe in him at all.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

It is idle to claim for Gondomar a place among European statesmen. He is not even a prominent figure in the history of his own country. There are many educated Spaniards to whom his name is scarcely known. But his failure to leave a mark upon history is due less to his own limitations than to the mistaken policy of his Government, or rather of a succession of Spanish Governments, which aimed at the realisation of an ideal which the progress of years and the development of surrounding nations had rendered impossible. Gondomar himself was deceived, as every Spanish politician was deceived, but he was not the author, though he was in some degree a promoter, of the national misconception.

As to the merits and weakness of his diplomacy, his record as ambassador speaks for itself. It demonstrates the industry and courage with which he struggled against adverse forces to win for Spanish influence an unparalleled position at the English Court ; the combination of audacity and finesse by which he kept a great Protestant state paralysed, unable to strike a blow for its religion abroad ; the devotion with which he strove to carry through the negotiations for the marriage which would cleanse

England from the stain of heresy and place her feet in the safe road of civil and religious despotism. And of all this plotting and planning, conducted with such untiring energy and brilliant skill, what was the result? Absolutely nothing. The diplomacy of Gondomar, clever as it was, did not advance by one jot the authority or prestige of Spain in Europe. It imposed upon James and a knot of courtiers at Whitehall. It infuriated the English clergy and the middle class; it quickened the traditional hatred of Spain into a heartfelt detestation. Abroad, it gave temporary assistance to the Catholics in the opening stages of the Thirty Years' War; but the idea of converting Protestant Germany was even more fantastic than the idea of converting England. The struggle continued for twenty-two years after Gondomar was in his grave, and had, before Westphalia quenched the flame, involved half the nations of Europe.

If Gondomar had been a first-rate politician it is doubtful whether he could have saved Spain. The roots of Spanish decay lay very deep. But he might have saved himself from more than one serious mistake. He would not have allowed himself to be a permanent source of irritation to the people of London. He would have seen that the only way to establish a friendship between England and Spain was to persuade the English people that the nations of Europe were not coloured black and white; that the Spanish nation was not entirely given up to cruelty and religious superstition; and that its ambassador was not necessarily a sort of ogre. His attitude, on the

contrary, was that of a man blinded by bigotry and prejudice. A wiser man would not have ignored the hatred which was directed, not only against him, but against his master and his country. But Gondomar was content to leave Whitehall with an embrace from James and a friendly handshake from Buckingham, and pass home in his litter along the streets, greeted by the middle class with sullen faces and by the apprentices with ribald insults. He might, too, have saved himself from the fatal mistake of insisting on Raleigh's punishment. The spectacle of one of the only two men of real genius whom England possessed, however grave his offence, led to the scaffold at the bidding of a Spanish ambassador, was more damaging to Spain than a thousand piratical expeditions.

Not only must Gondomar be placed, as a statesman, infinitely below men like Bristol, but in the knowledge of the time in which he lived and of the real needs of his country, even below men like Winwood and Carleton. But if he cannot claim high praise as a statesman, he cannot be denied that measure of admiration which is always extended to a sincere patriot and an honest man. In his complete unselfishness and integrity he compares favourably with most Spanish politicians of his day, and still more favourably with the crew of grasping officials who surrounded James. He gave bribes, which were readily accepted, but the idea of Gondomar himself accepting a bribe is as strange as the idea of Lerma refusing one. Despite the arts of finesse and dissimulation which it was his business

to practise, he was a rigidly honourable man. If he deceived his master in the question of the marriage he erred from excess of zeal alone. He was a patriot to the backbone. In his early years, among the rugged hills and falling torrents of his native province, he had dreamed the dreams which Philip II. toiled for so many weary years to realise, and had been inspired with the belief which is enshrined in that iron monarch's half-despairing cry: "Surely God will in the end make His own cause triumph!"

In later life, in his magistracies at Toro and Valladolid, harassed by petty details of municipal administration, and afterwards in England, through the long years of hard work and ill-health, illumined by ephemeral triumphs which served only to embitter the sting of ultimate failure, he was guided by one motive alone—the advancement of the power of Spain and her king. Happily for him, he did not live to realise the extent of his failure. The kindly hand of death removed him before the negative results of Spanish diplomacy had been emphasised by the victory of the English people in their struggle for liberty, by the rise of the hated Dutch to the command of the seas, and by the failure of the Catholic religion to gain a further foothold in Germany. More happily still, he did not live to see the rapid degeneration of Spanish character and national life which took place during the long and unhappy reign of Philip IV., and which was aggravated by the reckless and prodigal policy of Olivares.

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